

THE
SOULES
PREPARATION
FOR CHRIST.

OR,
A TREATISE
OF CONTRITION.

Wherein is discovered
How God breaks the heart
and wounds the Soule, the con-
version of a Sinner to Himselfe.

PSAL. 51. 17.

*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: A broken and a
contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*



L O N D O N.
Printed for ROBERT DAVVLMAN, at the signe of
the Brazen-serpent in Pauls Church-yard.

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Christian Reader, thou hast here some Sermons brought to light,
which by reason of the Authors absence, are presented to thy
view, both with some lesser escapes, and in more homely termes,
than his judicious eye would have suffered.



THE SOVLES PREPARATION FOR CHRIST.

ACTS 2. 37.

Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts, and said to Peter and the other Apostles, Men and brethren, what shall wee doe to be saved?



IN this great worke of preparation for Christ, Observe two things. First, the dispensation of the worke of Grace on Gods part, hee pulls a sinner from sinne to himselfe; and secondly, the frame and temper of spirit that God works in the hearts of those, that hee doth draw: and that makes its selfe knowne in two particulars; partly in Contrition, partly in Humiliation. For our better proceeding in the prosecution of these two maine points, I shall handle them severally, and at large.

large. And first we will sift out what this Contrition and humiliation is, that wee may not deceive our selves, and thinke we have them, when it is nothing so.

What contrition is.

This Contrition (as I conceive) is nothing else, but namely, when a sinner by the sight of sinne, and vilenesse of it, and the punishment due to the same, is made sensible of sinne, and is made to hate it, and hath his heart separated from the same; and the sight of sinne makes it selfe knowne in three particulars: First, when the soule is sensible of sinne;
 1. Secondly, when it hath a hearty and sound sorrow
 2. for the same, and an earnest detestation of it. Thirdly, when he hath his heart separated from his corruptions. All these are not wrought, so much by any power that is in us, as by the Almighty power of God working in us; for the sinner would not see his sinne, but the Lord forceth him, as the holy Prophet saith: *Thou holdest my eyes waking, I am so troubled that I cannot speake*, the Lord holds sinne to a carnall sinfull wretch, so that his sinne walketh, and sleepeth, and goeth with him; nay, the soule of a poore sinner would beat back the blow, and would not have the word to touch him, hee labours to shift off the arrowes of the Almighty, which the Lord shooreth into the soule; but the Lord wil not suffer him so to doe; *Thy arrowes sticke fast in mee, and thy hand presseth me sore*. Psal. 38.2. As if the Prophet had said, I would faine have beat backe thine arrowes, but they stick fast in mee; and I would have shaken off the burden, that lay upon me, but thine hand presseth me sore, so then at last, when the sinner

psal. 74. 4.

psal. 38. 2.

sinner sees, he cannot shake off the arrowes, then he is content to be separate from his corruptions.

This is in generall in the text, wherein you shall plainly see these three particulars fully expressed.

First, the sight of sinne by the hearing of *Peters* words, and it was not by the bare hearing of his words onely, but when *Peter* came somewhat roundly home to them, and said; This is *Christ Iesus* whom ye have crucified, then followes the former worke, namely, the acknowledgement of their sins, and the first cause that made them see their sinne, was a particular application of their finnes, he came punctually and particularly to them, and said, You are they that have crucified the Lord Christ, this touched them and made them see their finnes.

Secondly, the daily and serious meditation and apprehension of their finnes, and of those truths, which were delivered in the word: *hearing*, that is, daily pondering and considering of the evils, that were committed by them and shewed to them.

Thirdly, *they were pricked*, they did not pricke themselves, but the Lord followed that truth that was delivered, and by his Almighty hand did make that word prosperous to their soules; and though they would not pierce themselves, yet the Lord pierced them.

The second part of it is in these words, *They were pricked in their hearts*, not in their hands or eyes, but in their hearts.

The third part is the separation from sin in these words, *Men and brethren, what shall we doe? Whatsoever you would have us to doe, we will doe it, and*

whatsoever sinne is forbidden, we are content to be rid of it; nay, nothing was too hard, or too much for them.

Give mee leave to take a doctrine by the way from the words; they when *they heard this*, who were these (*they?*) see this in the 36. verse, *them that had crucified the Lord of life.*

What will some say, is it possible that ever they should be so pierced for their sinnes? it was said of *Indas* that betrayed Christ, *It had benee good for that man that he had not benee borne.* What shall wee thinke of those that murther Christ? If *Indas* was damned for betraying of Christ; then much more they for killing of him. Is it possible the Lord should doe good unto them? yes, even they came to be pricked in their hearts.

Doctrine

From these words this doctrine ariseth; It is possible for the most stubborne sinners upon earth to get a broken heart. *They that stoned the Prophets and killed them that were sent unto them*, and slighted all the meanes of grace, they that refused Christ, and would not heare him; they are now brought upon their knees, & are resolved now, if any course might be taken, to get Christ & mercy. *Tis. 1. 12. 13.* one of their owne Prophets said, *The Cretians are alwayes lyers, evill beasts, and slow bellies*: a man would thinke it a vaine thing to meddle with them, they are such desperate wretches, but the text saith, *Reprove them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith*, so that a Cretian which is a filthy beast, by a sound reproofe, may come to be a glorious Saint: and whereas the Jewes had loaden the Lord with their sinnes;

finnes; therefore it was just with God to ease himselfe of hisburden, and to send them and their sinnes downe to hell together. Thus a man would think; but the Lord did not so, as we may see in *Esay, I am he, that blotteth out all thy transgressions, for my owne name sake, I will remember your sinnes no more, and as the Apostle saith, the Gentiles were full of all unrighteousnesse, worse then they almost could be for all kinde of degrees of sinne, and yet many of them became full of all holinesse; Such were some of you* (saith the Apostle) and in another place we may see that a *Scarlet* sinner may become a *Saint* in nature; we know this scarlet is such a deepe die, that all the Art under heaven cannot alter it: Yet the Lord can make of a *Scarlet* sinner, a milke-white Saint. I doe not say it will ever be, and it doth alwayes come to passe, but it is possible.

*Esay 43.
23. 25.*

*Rom. 1. 29
30.*

Esay 1. 18

The reason is taken from the Lords Almighty goodnesse and power, the Lord is able to supply all wants, and amend that which is amisse, nay, hee is able to doe more than that thou standest in neede of. When the Lord made heaven and earth he did not spend all his strength, that he was able to helpe no more. No, no; he is All-sufficient still, he is not onely able to continue that good, which the creature hath, but to make a glorious supply of whatsoeuer is wanting, as *David* saith, *He pardoneth all thy iniquities, and forgiveth all thy sinnes*: not some, but all, otherwise he were not All-sufficient, unlesse he had a salve for every sore, and a medicine for every malady; if our sinnes were more than God could pardon, or if our weakenesses were more able to

Reason.

*psal. 103.
3.*

overthrow us, then his strength to uphold us, hee were not All-sufficient: Indeepe there are some things which the Scripture saith, God cannot doe, but it is not because of the want of power in God, but because there is a weakenesse in the creature; As God cannot deny himselfe: but the more and greater our sinnes and wickednesses are, the more will the strength and glory of his power appeare in pardoning of them; and where sinne abounds, there grace abounds much more in the pardoning of the same: Christ is All-sufficient in power to procure mercy for all thy sinnes, and the Spirit is all-sufficiently able to apply the satisfaction of Christ to thy soule, and therefore be thy condition never so searefull, (the sin against the holy Ghost onely excepted) there is power and mercy in the Lord to pardon thee, and it is possible for thee to finde mercy.

Use.

The first use is for reproofe, and it checks the desperate discouragement that harbours in the hearts of many poore sinners, that if they finde no power in themselves, no succour in the meanes; they doe question in this case, and presently conclude an impossibility to receive mercy, and they thinke there is no hope of pardon, as heretofore they have had no care in sinning; because they cannot see how it may be, they suppose it cannot be: This bringeth a great indignity to the Lord Jesus Christ, and a great discouragement to themselves: why? the Lord hath hardnesse, and difficulties at command.

2 King. 25.

When the siege about Jerusalem was mervailous sore, and every man did despaire of any comfort or succour, the Prophet said, *before to morrow this time*

shall

shall a measure of fine flower be sold for a sheke, and then a Lord on whose hand the King leaned, said, If the Lord should make windowes in heaven, how can this thing be, and the Prophet said unto him, Thou shalt see it, but not eate of it; so it is with many that begge often, and the Lord answereth not, so that the soule is mervailously starved, and the flood of iniquity comes in amaine upon the soule, and all his sinnes come to his view, and the heart begins to reason in this manner; If the depthes of Gods mercies should be opened, can all these sinnes be pardoned? and can this damned soule of mine be saved? Surely this cannot be. It is just with God we should seeke mercy, given to others as bad as wee, and yet wee not taste of it, because wee distrust the Lord. Cains sinne was so much the greater, because he said it could not be forgiven: so it is a horrible sinne to say, the Lord is not so mercifull, as the devill is malicious; and that the world, and a sinfull heart, shall be more able to damne me then God is to save me; if this were so, God were no God, and Christ no redeemer, and the Spirit no comforter: this is to make sinne, our selves, and the devill above God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh therefore check all those discouragements of soule which too much prevaile with us.

Secondly, it is a ground of great encouragement to provoke the hearts of all wicked men under heaven, to looke out of that condition wherein they are, for some mercy; because the most wicked of the world may be wrought upon, and the most prophane heart may be pierced; Who therefore

would not have his heart quickned up, to seeke out for recovery from that estate wherein he is. All you poore creatures, if there be any here present, as I doubt not but there are, Oh you poore and ungodly sinfull creatures, my soule pitties you, you that have had your hands imbrewed in the blood of Christ, and whose sinnes are written with a pen of Iron, and are seene in every corner of the street, you that are thus in the gall of bitternesse, and yet in the kingdome of darknesse, though your case for the present be very desperate, yet here is a little twigge in the midst of the maine sea, whereupon you may lay hold. And this may make you looke up, the Lord may shew mercy unto you, as proud, as stubborne, and rebellious as you, have had mercie; If you have the hearts of men, looke for mercy; though your estate be fearefull for the present, yet it may be good: God hath not set the seale of condemnation upon your sinnes, hee hath not yet sent you to hell. Consider this whatsoever thou art, thou yet livest upon the earth, and enjoyest the meanes, and it is possible yet to have all thy sinnes pardoned; oh lay about thee, goe home, and say, Good Lord, were they pierced in their hearts, that pierced the Lord Jesus; and were their soules wounded? In conclusion then, why may not my prophane sinfull heart be humbled and pierced? It may be so; if the Lord say, *Amen*, it will be thus; that disease is not past remedy that hath beene cured in others, therefore let this stay thy heart, as bad as thou, have beene humbled, and brought home, and therefore why not thou?

But

But the soule will say, Can all these abominations be removed? and is it possible all these rebellions of my heart should be pardoned, and all this loosenesse and security should be cast behind the backe of the Lord? Surely it cannot be.

Object.

It is possible: only labour thou that it may be, and that thou mayest not be puffed up with presumption, consider these three Cautions in thy seeking.

Answ.

First, consider in thy seeking, a little mercy will not serve the turne; thou that hast beene an old weather-beaten sinner, and hast wallowed in thy filthinesse, when thou goest to God for grace, consider it is not a little grace, or a small worke that will doe the deed: it is not a few spoonfulls or buckets-full, that will cleanse a foule skinne; so if thou hast had a filthy, prophane heart, which hath beene a thorow-fare to all wickednesse, and thou hast thus given thy selfe liberty thereunto, and hast continued therein; there must be a Well of mercy to purge such a miserable wretch as thou art.

3 Cauti-
ons.

I.

When *David* had committed those two sinnes of adultery and murder, and had continued in them long, he was forced to begge for much mercy, and to say, *Purge me, wash me, cleanse me.* O Lord, these staines are mervailous deepe, therefore purge mee with hysope; nay, he had never done with it, because his sinnes were more than ordinary; So, it will cost a great deale of worke before a loose prophane drunkard can be made cleane.

psal 51.

Secondly, thou must expect it with much difficulty and hardnesse in thy selfe, thou that hast beene rivetted in thy base lusts and corruptions, the Lord

2.

will

will

will make all crack before thou shalt finde mercy; thou that hast out-braved heaven with thy prophanenesse, the Lord will make thee a mirrour of humiliation, as heretofore thou hast bin a spectacle of filthinesse. A man that hath had a bone long out of joynt, and it is now festred, it will make him cry many an *oh*, before it be brought into his right place againe; So it is with a man whose heart is full of filthinesse, it will cost him much paines and difficulty and heart-smart, before the Lord will bring the soule to a right set againe. *Manasses* humbled himselfe mightily before the Lord, because he had beene a mighty proud rebellious man, the Lord made his humiliation as miraculous as his sinnes had beene, and so *David* when he had given his sinnes ease in bedding with them, the Lord brake all his bones, and did awaken him with a witnesse.

3.

Lastly, you must resolve to bestow the utmost of your endeavour to get this mercy at the hands of the Lord: It is not a dipping of a foule cloath in water will cleanse it, but it must be soaked and rinsed in it: so you must not think to have the foule staines of sinne washed away with a few teares; No, no, you must rub your hearts over and over, and awake your consciences againe and againe; it is not a little examination, nor a little sorrow will serve the turne; the Lord will pull downe those proud hearts of yours, and (it may be,) let you goe a begging for mercy all your dayes, and well you may have it at your last gaspe when all is done.

Doctrines

The first doctrine I will observe is this: There must be a true sight of sinne before the soule can be broken,

broken; for the text saith, They did first *heare*, and then apprehend the evill that was done by them; and thus they were brought to a saving remorse for their finnes: *Ezek. 36. 31.* the text saith, *Then shall you remember your owne evill wayes and your doings, that were not good, and shall loath your selves for your abominations.* First, they shall remember their works, and then loath themselves; it is the course that *Ephraim* takes in *Jeremiah*, *After that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh; and after I was turned, I repented, I was ashamed and confounded, because I did beare the reproach of my youth.* And it is Gods course which he takes with his, as in *Iob*. *When the Lord had once gotten his people into fetters, he shewed them their Wickednesse, and makes their eares open to discipline.* And in another place the Prophet sheweth the ground and reason why the people repented nor, they understood not the ground and reason of their sinne, *For no man saith, What have I done?* As a horse rusheth into the battaile and feareth nothing, so a wicked man continues in a sinfull course, never considering what he hath done; the drunkard doth not say, *How have I abused Gods creatures?* and the despiser of Gods ordinances doth not say, *How have I rejected the Lord Jesus Christ?* And therefore no wonder though he be not affected with that he doth.

Now for the better clearing of this doctrine, I will handle these three things. First, I will shew what this true sight of sinne is: Secondly, I will shew the reason why there must be a true sight of sinne before the soule can bee broken for it:

thirdly,

Ezek. 36.

31.

Jerem. 31.

29.

Iob 36.9.

Jerem. 3.

6.8.

Jer. 16.4

22

Lam. 4.9

What the
true sight
of sin is.

The pro-
perty of it.

Pfal. 119.
59.
opened,

thirdly, I will make use of the point.

First, it is not every sight of sinne will serve the turne, nor every apprehension of a mans vilenesse; but it must have these two properties in it, First, he must see sinne clearely; Secondly, convictingly. First, he that will see sinne clearely, must see it truly and fully, and be able to sadome the compasse of his corruptions, and to dive into the depth of the wretchednesse of his vile heart, otherwise it will befall a mans sinne as it doth the wound of a mans body: when a man looks into the wound overly, and doth not search it to the bottome, it begins to fester and rancle, and so in the end he is slaine by it; so it is with most sinners, wee carry all away with this, Wee are sinners; and such ordinary confessions; but we never see the depth of the wound of sin; and so are slaine by our sinnes. It is not a generall, slight, and confused sight of sinne that will serve the turne: it is not enough to say, It is my infirmity, and I cannot amend it: and wee are all sinners, and so forth. No, this is the ground why wee mistake our evils, and reforme not our wayes, because we have a slight and an overly sight of sinne: a man must prove his wayes as the Goldsmith doth his gold in the fire, a man must search narrowly, and have much light to see what the vilenesse of his owne heart is, and to see what his sinnes are, that doe procure the wrath of God against him, as the Prophet David saith: *I considered my wayes, and turned my feete into thy testimonies*: the phrase in the originall is thus much; I turned my sinnes upside downe; he looked all over his wayes. And as Zachary

chary saith : *When the people shall looke unto him whom they have pierced, and consider the nature of their sins, then shall they mourne :* Note, that this cleare sight of sinne may appeare in two particulars.

First, a man must see his sinne nakedly in its owne proper colours, wee must not looke upon sinne through many mediums, through profits, pleasures, and the contentments of this world; for so we mistake sinne: but the soule of a true Christian that would see sinne clearely, hee must strip it cleane of all content and quiet that ever the heart hath received from any corruption; and the heart must looke upon sinne in the danger of it; as the adulterer must not looke upon sinne in regard of the sweetnesse of it, nor the drunkard upon his sinne in regard of the contentment that comes thereby, nor the covetous man in regard of the profit that comes by his sinne; you that are such, the time will come when you must die, and then consider what good these sinfull courses will doe you, how will you judge of sinne then, when it shall leave a blot upon thy soule, and a guilt upon thy conscience; what wilt thou then thinke of it? Wee must deale with sinne as with a serpent; wee must not play with a serpent as children doe, because it hath a fine speckled skinne, but fly from it, because of the sting: so must we deale with sinne: A prophane Gallant will prophane the Sabbaths, because otherwise hee should be counted a Puritane: Looke not at the speckled skinne of sinne; but how thou canst answer for thy sinne before God, especially seeing the Lord saith, *I will not hold that man guiltlesse that blasphemeth*

Zach. 11.
10

I.

blasphemes my name, of what place or condition so ever he be: Looke now on the nature of thy sinnes nakedly.

2. Secondly, we must looke on the nature of sinne in the venome of it, the deadly hurtfull nature that it hath for plagues and miseries, it doth procure to our soules; and that you may doe, partly if you compare it with other things, and partly if you looke at it in regard of your selves: First, compare sinne with those things that are most fearefull and horrible; As suppose any soule here present were to behold the damned in hell, and if the Lord should give thee a little peepe-hole into hell, that thou didst see the horror of those damned soules, and thy heart begins to shake in the consideration thereof; then propound this to thy owne heart, what paines the damned in hell doe endure for sinne, and thy heart will shake and quake at it, the least sinne that ever thou didst commit, though thou makest a light matter of it, is a greater evill then the paines of the damned in hell, setting aside their sinne; all the torments in hell are not so great an evil, as the least sin is: men begin to shrink at this, and loathe to goe downe to hell, and to be in endlesse torments.

What a
horrible
thing sin
is.

Now I will make it good by three reasons, that sin is a greater evill than those torments & plagues which the damned in hell doe endure.

I.
Reason.

The first reason is this, That which deprives a man of the greatest good, must needes be the greatest evill; nature sayes so much; that which deprives a man of all that comfort and happinesse wherein

wherein the soule findes most content, that must needes be the greatestt evill of all, but sinne onely deprives a man of the greatestt good: for the good of the soule, is, to have a heart united unto God, and to have fellowship with him, to have him, and salvation through him, to be one with the Lord: this is the chiefeest good of the soule: All things here below are made for the good of the body, and the body is made for the good of the soule, and the soule is made for God; and these things here below are onely so farre good to us, as they are means to make us enjoy a nearer communion with God: and contrarily, riches, and honours, and profits, and pleasures, are as so many curses to us, if by them our hearts be withdrawne from God: The reason why God is estranged from us, it is not because we are poore, or pursued, or imprisoned, or the like; but it is sinne that breakes the union betweene God and us, as the Prophet *Esay* saith, *Your finnes have separated betweene you and your God*: Now that which separates from God which is the chiefeest good, it is our finnes; it is not punishment, that takes away the mercy of God from us; but a proud rebellious heart, and the contempt of Gods ordinances; Therefore sinne is farre worse than all the plagues that the damned doe or can suffer.

Esay 59.2.

Secondly, because there is nothing so contrary and opposite against the Lord as sinne and corruption; and this is the reason why God is the inflicter of all the punishments of the damned in hell: it is through the Justice of God that they are damned, because

Reason 2

Reason 3

because God is of such a pure nature that sinne cannot be in him, nor practised by him.

Thirdly, because it is sinne that doth procure all plagues and punishments to the damned, and therefore being the cause why they suffer, it must needs be greater than all punishments: for all punishments are made miserable by reason of sinne, therefore sinne is a greater evill than all the miseries of the damned. If a man were in prison and had the peace of a good Conscience, his prison would be a Pallace unto him, and though a man were in shame and disgrace, and yet have the favour of God, there were no misery in him; so it is with sinne, if no man suffer but for sinne, then sinne is a greater evill than all other punishments, as being the fountaine from whence they flow.

Now let us looke upon sin through these things, and when our corrupt heart provokes us, and the world allures us, and the devil tempts us to take any contentment in a sinfull way; suppose we saw hell-fire burning before us, and the pit of hell gaping to swallow us, and sinne inticing of us; and let us say thus to our soules, It is better for a man to be cast into the torments of hell amongst the damned, than to be overcome with any sinne, and so to rebell against the Lord. Now therefore if those plagues and punishments make the soule shake in the consideration of them; Oh then blesse thy selfe so much the more from sinne which is the cause of all plagues whatsoever; Were a man in hell and wanted his finnes, the Lord would love him in hell, and deliver him from all those plagues: But if any man

man were free from all punishments, and in honour, and wealth, if he were a sinfull and wretched creature, the Lord would hate him in the height of all his prosperity, and throw him downe to hell forever.

Secondly, wee must see sinne simply as it is in it selfe, in regard of the proper worke of it; it is nothing else but a profest opposing of God himselfe, a sinfull creature joynes side with the devill and the world, and comes in battaile array against the Lord, and flies in the face of the God of hosts; they are called, *haters of God*, Psalm. 83. That is, when they see grace in another man, in such a man, and in such a woman, and hate them for it; little doe they thinke that they *hate the God of heaven* and his holy nature; and if it were possible, they would have no God in heaven, to take notice of their sinnes, and call them to account for them, as the wise man Gamaliel said to the Pharisees and Elders; *Refraine your selves from these men, and let them alone, for if this Counsell or worke be of men, it will come to nothing, but if it be of God, you cannot destroy it; lest you be found fighters against God; you make nothing of opposing the Gospell, and preaching thereof; I tell you that there is never a creature that lives in any such sinfull course, but hee is a fighter against God, and hee resists the Lord as really as one man doth another: And as Stephen saith, Thou stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart, you have resisted against the holy Ghost: You must not thinke that you resist men onely, no (poore creatures) you resist the Spirit, and so hymne at the Al-*

Pl. 83. 1.

mighty in opposing of the meanes of grace; What a fearefull condition is this. I pray you in cold blood consider this; and say thus, Good Lord! What a sinfull wretch am I? that a poore damned wretch of the earth should stand in defiance against the God of hosts, and that I should submit my selfe to the devill, and oppose the Lord of hosts?

And as you resist the Lord, so you doe also passe the sentence of condemnation upon your selves, and scale up that doome which one day shall be executed upon the wicked in hell at that great day of accompt; that looke what God shall doe then, the same thou doest now by sinning; this is the doome, or (as I may say) the necke-verse of the wicked and the last blow; as now thou doest depart from God by sinning, so then thou shalt depart from God for ever. A wicked man forsakes God, and pluckes his heart from under the wisdom of God, that should informe him in the way of life; and the soule saith, God shall not blesse me, God shall not be God unto me; but I will live as I list, and I will run downe post-haste to hell. And when your hearts begin to rise against God and his ordinances, and your soules begin to goe against the Lord; I tell you what I would thinke with my selfe; suppose I heard the voyce of the Archangell crying; *Arise yee dead and come to judgement*; and the last trumpet sounding, and the Lord Jesus coming in the heavens with his glorious Angells, and did see the Goates standing on the left hand, and the Saints on the right band, and with that I did
heare

heare the terrible sound, *Depart ye cursed* : would you be content to heare that sentence passe against your soules ? Oh what lamentation and woe your poore soules would make in those dayes ; and therefore consider it well, and say that dooeth that in sinning which the Lord will doe in the day of Judgement : shall I depart from the Lord, and withdraw my selfe from mercie, and say, *Christ shall not rule over mee and save mee* ? Shall I doe that against my selfe which the Lord shall doe in that day ? God forbid. There are two things hardly knowne ; what God is, and what our sinnes are, or else we hardly apply the knowledge of them to our selves.

But some will object and say, if sinne be so vile in it selfe, then why doe not men see it ?

To this I answer, the reason why men see not their sinnes, though it be so vile, it is mainly upon these two grounds.

First, because wee judge not of sinne according to the Word and verdict of it, but either in regard of the profit that is therein, or the pleasure that wee expect there from. The Usurer lookes on his profit that comes by sinne, and the adulterer on his pleasure ; and *Judas* saw the money, but he did not see the malice of his owne heart, nor the want of love to his Master, and this made him take up that course which he did, but when hee threw away his thirtie pence, the Lord made him see the villenesse of his sinne ; it came clearely to his sight, and therefore hee cryed out : *I have sinned in betraying innocent blood*. As bribes blinde the eyes of the wise

Object.

Answer.
Why men see not the villenesse of sinne.

I.

and pervert judgement, so sinne bribes the eyes of the soule, & therefore the Trades man seeth much profit come by cozening and false measures, and so gives way to himselfe therein, but hee sees not the sinne; so the oppressour seeth the mortgages, and pawnes that comes in, but he cannot see his sin, till he be laid on his death-bed, and then the Lord sheweth him all the wrong that he hath done.

2.

Secondly, another reason why wee see not the vilenesse of sinne, is, because wee judge the nature of sinne according to Gods patience towards us, as thus; a man commits a sinne, and is not plagued for it, and therefore hee thinks God will not execute judgements upon him at all, *all things continue alike*, (saith the wicked man) as if hee had said, you talke of the wrath of God that shall be revealed from heaven against all ungodlinesse. But whose is the promise of his coming? Doe you not see that such a man is an oppressour, and a prophane person? yet growes rich and thrives in the world; and because God spares a wicked man still for the present, therefore hee thinks all are but words, hee shall be free from the punishment to come, (as the Prophet saith in the name of the Lord) *These things hast thou done and I kept silence*, when thou wast upon thy Ale-bench, and there thou didst speake against holinesse and purity: and because I did beare yet, and said nothing, therefore thou speakest wickedly, that *I was even such a one as thy selfe*; The wicked man takes Gods patience to bee a kinde of allowance to him in his sinne, (as the Wise man saith) *because sentence against an evill worke*

Job 20

Job 20
Job 20
Job 20
Job 20
Job 20

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Psal 50.2

Eccles 8.
11.

worke is not speedily executed, therefore the hearts of the
 sonnes of men are wholly set in them to doe mischief,
 and as the Prophet saith, they call the proud happy,
*They that worke wickednesse are set up, and they that
 tempt God are deliuered.* As who should say, you
 say that the wrath of God is incensed against swea-
 rers, and drunkards, and the like; but we see them
 prosper, and because they doe prosper thus, their
 hearts are set to worke wickednesse: but howso-
 ever it is true, the Lord doth sometime beare with
 wicked men; the longer God stayes, the greater
 account they shall make, and the heavier judge-
 ments they shall receive from God: See what *Iob*
*saith, Thou sealest up my transgressions in a bagge, and
 thou sewest up mine iniquities;* Wicked men doe
 treasure up vengeance against the day of the Lord,
 the prophane person treasures up wrath, and in the
 eighteenth verse he saith: The mountaines falling
 come to nothing: as if hee had said, Good Lord,
 who can beare all these sinnes, that I have commit-
 ted? Are they all sealed up, and shall all the judge-
 ments due unto them fall upon me heavier then the
 mountaines? Good Lord, what rocke or moun-
 taine can beare the weight of my sinnes thus sealed
 up and settled, and laid close to my heart. And so
 God seales up an hundred thousand oathes in one
 bagge; and an ocean of pride & mischiefs done to
 Gods people and Church, are barrellled up in ano-
 ther: and the Lord shall one day lay all these upon
 thy neck: Who is able to beare all these sinnes?

Now it falls out with a sinner as it is with a bank-
 rout debtor, one man throwes him into prison, and

Mal. 3. 15.

Iob 14. 17.

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when he is there, every one comes against him, and so he shall never come out, but die and rot in the prison, : so though the Lord will not execute judgement on thee speedily, yet in the end the Lord will be paid for all thy sinnes; and when thou art in hell, then mercy, and justice, and patience will cry all to heaven for justice and vengeance; then happily a drunkard is cast into prison for his drunkenesse, and for his blasphemy, and then all his filthinesse comes in as so many bills of inditement against him: Oh therefore labour to see sin alive: we play with sin as if it were dead: when children see the picture of a dead Lyon upon a wall, they labour to pull him in pieces; but if there were a live Lyon in the place, it would make the strongest to runne. So thou paintest thy sinne, and sayest, it is thy infirmity, and God forgive your swearing, and the like; and thus you dally with your sinnes: but brethren, labour to see sinne alive, and to see sinne roaring upon you; see the pawe of sinne, and the condemnation that shall be throwne upon the soule by it, and this will awake the soule in the apprehension of it.

How to
see our
sinns con-
victingly.

Secondly, we must see sinne convictingly, that it may be so to us as it is in it selfe; that looke what sinne is in it selfe, we may so conceive of it in our soules being guilty of it; and this discovers it selfe in these two particulars.

First, when wee have a particular apprehension in our owne person, that looke what we confesse to be in sinne in generall, we confesse the same in our owne soules; and that our sinnes are as bad as the
sinnes

sinnes of any : this is the cursed distemper of our hearts, howsoever we hold it to be truth in generall, yet when we come to our owne sinnes, the case is altered, and we never come to the right seeing of them, as they concerne our owne particular. As the adulterer can easily confesse the danger and filthinesse of that sinne in others, but hee thinks not his sinne to be so vile ; as the Wise man saith, *Hee that enters into the house of an harlot, doth hee ever returne againe, doth he ever take hold of the path of life ?* The Lord is pleased to set such a heauey stampo on this sinfull distemperature. These are truthes, and a man in his cold blood will easily confesse it in the generall, that hee *never returnes againe*. Take the words as they are in the letter of them, and howsoever they have some other interpretations, yet in the letter it is thus read, *hee is ever hardly recovered*, Howsoever it may be, yet with much difficulty. *David* had let his soule loose in that, and hee did hardly recover himselfe againe, scarce one of a thousand yet ever tooke hold of the way of life. And the drunkard will confesse the danger of his sinne in generall, when hee sees his drunken mates lie grovelling in the dust, he will be ashamed of it, and say, Now no adulterer or drunkard shall ever come into the Kingdome of heaven ; but heere is the wound of it, when hee comes to his owne particular drunkennesse and uncleannesse, that hee must looke into them, then the sight of a mans knowledge hath not so much power as to judge himselfe rightly ; or to make a particular application to himselfe ; but hee thinkes his adultery and drunkennesse

Pro. 2. 19.

Iob 13. 27.

kennesse is not like to another mans, or else his knowledge is but weake, or else hee seeth as a man in the twy-light, when the sunne is downe, and the heavens begin to withdraw their light, though a man can see to read abroad, yet hee cannot see to read in the house, or in the chamber; *Swit* with a weake knowledge, and with a feeble understanding in a wicked man, he is not able to see the vile nature of sinne in himselfe, when he comes to read his owne closet sinnes, and his bosome abominations, then hee hath not so much light as to perceive them so fully in himselfe as hee thought to doe; therefore the rule is this: Arrest thy soule in a speciall manner of those sinnes whereof thou standest guilty; that phrase in *Iob* is to good purpose, *Thou lookest narrowly to my pathes, thou settest a print upon the heeles of my feete*: as God followed *Iob* to the hard heeles, and did narrowly observe his wayes; so deale thou with thy owne soule, and set a print upon the heele of thy heart; arrest thy heart in particular for thy sinnes; and I would have you perceive your owne particular sinnes, and follow them to your hearts, and make huy and cry after your sinnes, and dragge your hearts before the Lord, and say; Is murther, pride, drunkenness, and uncleanness, such horrible sinnes, and doth God thus fearefully plague them? Lord, it was my heart that was proud and vaine, it was my tongue that did speake filthily and blasphemously, my hand hath wrought wickedness, my eye was wanton, and my heart was unclean and filthy, Lord here they are; it is my affections that are disorderly, and it is I that doe delight

light too much in the world: Thus bring thy heart
before the Lord; you shall observe the same in
David, so long as *Nathan* spake of sinne in generall,
he conceived of it truly, and confessed the vileneſſe
of it; and the heart of this good King did rage
against the man, saying, It is the *Sonne of death*: but
as soone as the Prophet had said, *Thou art the man*,
though hee never saw his sinne kindly before, yet
now his heart yeilded, and hee began to see him-
selfe and his sinne in the naturall colours of it. So
the Apostle *John* saith; *Hee that hateth his brother is
a man-slayer, and you know no man slayer hath eternall
life abiding in him.*

Then play thou the part of *Nathan*, and say, *I am
the man*: it is this wretched heart of mine that hath
hated the Saints of God; and therefore if I be a
murderer, will not my sinne keepe me from the
Kingdome of heaven as well as another mans? Yes
that it will, if pride and stubbornnesse be such vile
sinnes in others, then they are so in me: and as there
must be a sight of our personall particular sins; so,

Secondly, the soule must be set downe with the
audience of truth, and the conscience of a sinner
should be so convicted, as to yeeld and give way to
that which is knowne, as not seeking any shift or
way to oppose that truth which is revealed; his par-
ticular apprehension of sinne, is like the inditement
of a sinner before God, and his conviction is that
which brings the soule to such a passe, that the heart
will not, nay it dares not, nay (which is more) it
cannot escape from the truth revealed: As when a
man is onely arrested, and no more; he may escape,
there-

therefore it is not enough particularly to arrest the soule, and bring it under command, that it cannot shift from the truth revealed: When the Lord comes to make racks in the hearts of such as hee meanes to doe good unto; the text saith, hee will *reprove the world of sinne*, that is, hee will *convince* the world of *wickednesse*, hee will set the soule in such a stand, that it shall have nothing to say for it selfe, hee cannot shift it off; for there is in every mans heart naturally such corrupt carnall pleading, that it labours to defeat, and put by the worke of the word, that it may not come home to the heart. As a man in battaile array labours to put by the blow that it may not hit his body; so it is with a corrupt heart when the Word comes home to the soule, as it doth sometimes into the heart of a drunkard, or an adulterer, or a murtherer, and the word of God seemes to stab the heart, they put by the word of God by carnall shifts, and so breake the power of it that it cannot have its full blow upon the soule, and so the word takes no place to any purpose in them.

Now this kinde of knowledge takes away all shifts, that the soule hath nothing to say for it selfe, and pluckes away all defence, that the edge of the word cannot be blunted, but that it will fall flat on the heart, this is that I would put to your consideration punctually; When there is that wisdome and knowledge revealed to the soule so powerfully, that it prevails with the heart, and it gives way thereto, so that all the replies and pleas of the soule be taken away, and the soule falls under the stroke

stroke of the word, not quarrelling, but yeelding it selfe, that the word may worke upon it, and withall there is a restless amazement put into the heart of the creature, and a kinde of dazeling the eye, so that the soule is not content now before it see the worst of his sinne that is revealed, and then it lies under the power of that truth which is made knowne; these two make it plaine: The Minister saith, God hates such and such a sinner; and the Lord hates me too, saith the soule, for I am guilty of that sinne. Many times when a sinner comes into the congregation, and attends unto the ordinary meanes of saluation, if now the Lord be pleased to worke mightily, at last the minde is enlightned, and the Minister meetes with his corruptions, as though he were in his bosome, and he answereth all his cavills, and takes away all his objections: With that the soule begins to be amazed to thinke that God should meete with him in this manner, and saith, If this be so, as it is for ought I know, and if all be true that the Minister saith, then the Lord be mercifull unto my soule, I am the most miserable sinner that ever was borne.

Give mee leave to open a passage or two this way; Suppose there be an ignorant creature, that knoweth nothing, and hee thinkes God will pardon him because he is so, and he need not consider of this or that which the Minister calls upon him for: see what God saith to such, *It is a people of no understanding, therefore he that made him will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour*: You thinke to carry all away with ignorance,

My beloved friend Henry Widdowes doth much
 commend this to you and desires to see you
 againe to knowe howe you are getting on in the
 way of God and howe you are
 getting on in the world

rance, but the God of heaven will shew you no pitie, and he that made you, will not save you: When a poore soule begins to consider of this, hee that made us, will save us: Will he not? No, hee will not: Not one of you, not your wife, nor children, nor thy servant: this drives the soule into amazement, when the Lord works this truth in him, and he frequents the ordinances more diligently, and sayes, If it be so, my case is fearefull; In conclusion he findes every Minister saith so, and all writings confirme it, and hee seeth it is so indeed; and it is the will and way of God: Then the soule is cast, and saith, I see this is just my estate and condition, and therefore woe to mee that ever I was borne. This is right conviction, and though his carnall neighbours come to him, and begin to cheere him up, and say, The Lord is more mercifull than men are, *Ministers* must say something, &c. If the heart be truly convicted, it returnes this answer, and saith: I have thought as you doe, but now I see there is no such matter, these are but figge-tree leaves, and will not cover my nakednesse; It is true, Christ came to save sinners, and hee came to humble sinners too, hee came to bind up the heart, and he came to breake the heart too. This is a great part of the spirit of bondage spoken of, *Rom. 8. 15.* *Wee have not received the spirit of bondage to feare againe.* When God hath revealed a mans bondage to him: So that hee sees himselfe bound hand and foote: for (marke it) so long as a man keepes in these carnall shifts, he is not in *bondage*; But when he is once in *bondage* and fettered; he saith, If ever
 any

any had a proud heart, I am he; If ever any were prophane, I am he; And if ever God hated such wretches, hee hateth me. Now there is no escape, there is no plea at all; he will not goe away and say, there is no such matter, Ministers may say what they will. No, no, the soule that is truly convicted of sinne yeelds it selfe, and saith I have sinned; *Oh what shall I doe unto thee: thou preservest my faith Job?* as if hee had said, Lord, I have no plea at all to make, nor no argument to alledge; for my selfe, I onely yeeld up the bucklers; I cannot say so bad of my selfe as I am, I have sinned, and done foolishly in thy sight. Thus it is with a heart truly convicted, and thoroughly informed of the viltenesse of sinne; hee doth not withdraw himselfe and play least in sight, but he saith, this is my condition just; the Lord met with my heart this day; God resists the proud and prophane in heart, and he resists me too; I have heard much, and would not be informed, therefore it is just with God to harden my heart for ever; the Lord hath done often with many loving perswasions to allure me, and draw me to him: If the devill had had the meanes that I have had, he would have beene moved and more bettered by them than I have bin, and have done more than I have done, I have hated and despised all, and to this day I have not bin brought upon my knees, shall not Christ rule over me, and yet save me? No it cannot be, except I can bring my neck under the yoke of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is impossible I should be saved by him, I excuse not my selfe Lord, nay, I confesse I know more than all the men in the world

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Reason.

Why God
convinceth men
of their
finnes.

I.

world can speake by me, and I yeeld to all this and more; what shall I say? *O thou preserver of men.*

The reason why God deales thus with poore sinners, is taken from the office which the Lord hath placed betweene the heart and the man: the ground lies thus.

There are two things in the soule: First, you conceive and understand a thing: Secondly, you will, and choose it.

The first is the in-let of the heart, so that nothing can affect the heart, but so farre as reason conceiveth it, and ushers it home to the soule; thereupon the heart, as the King hath his Councillors which call all matters before them, & consult about businesse, and then they bring them before the King, to have a finall sentence from him, to know what he will have, and what hee will not have: So the understanding is like the Coupcellors, and the will is the Queene; the understanding saith, this or that is good, then the will saith, let me have it: the understanding saith, these and these duties are required, and the will embraceth them; the vnderstanding conceives what sinne is, and the will saith, These and these evils have I done, and they will cost me my life if I repent not: As it was with *Iob*, when his *Oxen* and *Castell* were taken, it never troubled him, because he never knew it, but when hee heard of it by the messengers, he said, *Naked came I out of my mothers wombe.*

There must be a messenger before he can be grieved for the evil: So it is with the soule of a sinfull creature, the devill hath made a prey and a spoile of him:

him; thou camest into the world in *Adam*, wise, holy, and gracious; but he hath made thee unholy and ignorant, and thou considerest not this till God by his Ministers opens thy eyes, and makes thee see plainly, that the Image of sinne and Satan is upon thee, and that God is now become thy enemy, and that now thou goest on in the way to destruction, and art become the heire apparant of hell; And when these evill-tydings come to the understanding, that leaves them upon the heart and will of a man, and so lets it worke effectually upon it as God doth blesse the same; as *Paul* saith, *I know that through ignorance they did it: if they had knowne the Lord of life, they would never have crucified him.*

Acts 3.17.

This is the cause why we commit sin, because we see it not, and therefore we sorrow not for it. As it is with some hot clymates in the world, though there be never so much heat in the Sun, yet if there be no entrance for the heat into the house, it will not scorch nor heat any; so the understanding is like the dore or entrance into the house, and sinne is of a fiery and scorching nature, if there be no passage, and if the minde know not, and if the will affect not sinne, it will never scorch his conscience; though a man carry sinne enough in his bosome to sink his soule for ever, yet wee suffer it not to worke upon us, and we attend not to it, because the brazen wall keeps it off: as the Proverb is, That the eye never sees, the heart never rues. Because wee see not our evils, and discern not our finnes so clearly as we should, therefore it is impossible wee should be touched for them as we ought to be.

The

Use 1.

The first use is for instruction; from the former truth delivered, wee may learne that an ignorant heart is a naughty heart, and a miserable wretched heart, whether it be out of ignorance that cannot, or out of wilfulnesse that men will not apprehend their conditions, both are merveilous sinfull and miserable; I desire to deale plainly in this point, because I know there are many that doe flatter themselves in their conditions, and thinke all is well with them; I will say nothing of the cause, but I appeale to the hearts of all that heare me this day, and your selves shall be Judges in these particulars; Imagine you did see a poore sinner come before you, and lay open his condition, and bewaile it with bitternesse, saying, That for his owne part hee never did finde his heart touched for his sinnes, nor sorrow for his corruptions did ever enter into his soule, ~~but~~ hee hath lived senselesse and carelesse; and for this wounding of spirit hee counted it a wonder; for this humblenesse of heart it was ever a riddle unto him: let any one passe sentence upon this man now, and tell me seriously, what doe you thinke of such a person? I heare (me thinks) every man reason thus, (and every mans heart shakes at it) and saith, Good Lord, what a senselesse poore ignorant creature is this? If no humbling for sin, no pardoning for sinne, and no share in Christ, no salvation? What, is this a good heart that is not in the way to receive any good? If a man be never broken for sinne, God will never bind him up, and if never humbled, and burthened for his sinne, God will never ease him of it.

There-

Therefore woe to that soule that is thus miserable and accursed. I beseech you passe this sentence against your selves: Oh brethren, the hearts of men are past this brokennesse of spirit; nay, they are enemies to it, they never had their judgements cleared and convicted of their sinnes, and therefore their hearts were never broken, and this brokennesse is so farre from their heart as it never came into the head; we thinke not of the soule nature of sinne: Doeſt thou thinke this to be a good heart that was never humbled and prepared for Christ? alas, it is so farre from being truly wrought upon, that it was never in any way to partake of mercy from God; therefore thy condition is mervailous miserable; thy misery is as great as thy sinne, if not greater, because when a sinfull creature is wounded and galled for his sinne, there is some hope he may be cured and helped; but an ignorant soule is not capable of it, he is in hell and seeth it not; he is under the power of Satan, and thinkes himselfe at liberty; nay, for the present, hee is incapable of any good from the meanes appointed to that end.

It is with an ignorant soule as it befell the drunkard that was asleepe on the top of the Mast, who feares no harme, because hee sees it not. So it is with a sinfull heart, hee is resolved to goe on still in his sinne, because hee seeth not the danger; take a man that hath his heart stabbed with a Stiletto, and the wound is so narrow, that it cannot be searched, there is no meanes to come to it: Just so it is with a blind ignorant heart, there is much meanes whereby good might be done to it, but an igno-

rant heart barres all out, so that nothing can doe good to the soule. All counsels, admonitions, reproofes cannot prevaile, all mercies allure not, because they finde no sweetnesse in them; a Minister is as able to teach the stoole whereon hee sits as to doe them good. Mee thinkes it is with a world of men that live in the bosome of the Church, as it is with such as have suffered shipwrack; they are cast upon the waves, and their friends are standing upon the shoare, and see them, and mourne for them, there they see one sinking, and another floating upon the waves, even labouring for his life; and they sigh and mourne, but cannot helpe him; Just so is it with ignorant people that are swallowed up with the floods of iniquity; here is one man going, and there another in the broad way to destruction, and wee pittie them, and pray for them, that God would open their eyes, and give them the sight of their sinnes: but alas, they are not able to conceive of any thing. Wee cannot come at them, and thus they sinke in their sinnes.

Luke 29.
42.

Our Saviour looking over Jerusalem, said, *Oh that thou hadst knowne at least in this thy day the things that belong unto thy peace, but now they are hidden from thine eyes.* As if hee had said, *Oh now they are sinking, they will not be reformed nor reclaimed, now they are going the way of all flesh, and to hell too, the way of peace is hidden from their eyes, they refuse the meanes that may doe them good; I might here condemne the Papists that say, ignorance is the mother of devotion, whereas it is the breeder of all wickednesse, and the broad*

broad way to hell and everlasting destruction.

The use is this; as you desire the comfort of your soules, and to be prepared for mercy, and to partake of that rich grace that is in Christ; as you desire to have the rich promises of the Gospell put over to you, as ever you would have the Lord Jesus Christ a guest to your soules, you are to be entreated to give your soules no content, till you have your eyes so opened to see your finnes, that you may be convicted of them.

Now it may be some will say it is good that you say: but what meanes must we use to come to this sight of sinne? I answer to such poore soules, give mee leave to doe three things: First, I will shew some meanes how wee may come to see sinne convictingly:

Secondly, I will take away all the lets that may hinder a man from it.

Thirdly, I will use some motives to stirre us up to use the meanes, and set upon the service, though it be somewhat harsh and tedious to our corruptions. The meanes are three.

First, wee must goe to God for knowledge, the Lord knowes our hearts, therefore wee must goe to him, that he would make us able to know them too: the Church of Laodicea thought none like her selfe, as it is the fashion of many in this age so to doe; and therefore the Lord said, *Thou thoughtest thy selfe rich and full, and that thou didst want nothing*: It is an argument of a proud sinfull heart, that hee is alwayes wel conceited of himselfe, & of his owne wit, grace, and sufficiencie; but mark what

Use.

Quest.

Ans.

Meanes how to see sinne convictingly.

I.

the Lord saith to this Church, I counsell thee to buy of me *eye-salve*: She thought all her compters to be good gold; and all her appearances to be good Religion: but the Lord bids her buy of him *eye-salve*; As if hee had said, you see not your finnes, and therefore goe to God, and beseech him that dwells in endlesse light, to let in some light into your soules.

When the poore blind man *Bartimeus* sat begging by the way, saying, *O thou sonne of David have mercy upon me*, and pressed earnestly upon our Saviour, in so much that when his disciples rebuked him, hee cryed so much the more, *O thou sonne of David have mercy on mee*: and when Christ said, What wouldst thou have me to doe for thee: hee answered, *Lord, that I may receive my sight*. If he did so earnestly seeke for his bodily eyes, much more should we for the eyes of our soules, that wee may see our finnes: A blind mind brings a wicked heart with it, and layes a man open to all finnes; and therefore wee ought to be more pinched for the want of this sight, then of our bodily eyes: and if the question be asked, what wouldst thou have? *honour, riches, or the like*? Answer: O Lord, the sight of my sins; I know sin is a vile loathsome thing: O that I could see sinne convictingly and clearly.

Secondlie, labour to acquaint your selves thoroughly with God and with his law, and to see the compasse and breadth of it; the words of the commandements are few, but there are many finnes forbidden in them, and many duties required; therefore labour to see thy finnes convicted, and thy

many

Mark. 10.
15.

Object.

Ans.

Means 2

many duties neglected. The Apostle *Paul* thought himselfe office *alive without the law*, and who but hee in the world? he was able to carry all before him, he thought his penny good silver; but when the *Law came* (saith the text) *then sinne revived*, when God had opened my eyes to see my sinne, and the corruptions of my heart, than I saw my selfe a dead man; yet *Paul* was a Pharisee, and brought up at the feet of *Gamaliel*, and one that did keepe the Law of God in a strict manner. Whence we learne, that a man may be an ignorant man, be his parts never so great for humane learning: and the same Apostle saith, *I had knowne lust, except the Law of God had said, thou shalt not lust*; by which is meant the tenth commandement, which forbids the secret distemper of the heart, though there is no delight and consent to it; who but *Paul*? and yet hee knew it not, and therefore no wonder though many otherwise well learned are ignorant in Gods law, therefore looke your selves in this glasse of the Word, all you that say, how ever you are not able to talke so freely as others, yet you have as good a heart to God as the best, I tell you if you could but see the filthinesse of your hearts, you would be out of love with your selves for ever.

Thirdly, binde your hearts to the peace and good behaviour, and be willingly content to take every truth that is revealed, without quarrelling; and I would have a man to binde his heart, hand, and foote, that they may not dare to have any brabbling against the revealed will of God; that so what ever truth is delivered, though never so crosse and con-

Rom. 7.

Rom. 7. 7.

Means 3

Iob 40.3.

trary to our corrupt nature, the soule may be willing to be under the blow of it, and let the strength of the Word come full upon the heart; And this will make us feelingly to understand our condition: as in *Iob*, when God had taken downe his proud heart; see how he submits himselfe, *Behold, I am vile, what shall I say? I will lay my hand upon my mouth, I have sinned; but I will goe no further*; as though he had reasoned thus with himselfe; I have (I confesse) pleaded too much for my selfe, I have made more shift for my selfe then was needfull, I have gain-said thy Word, but now no more. Now if any man seeme to quarrell & take up armes against the truth of God, let that man know he was never truly humbled for his sinnes: It is a sinfull rebellious spirit that carries it selfe thus against God and his Word; the shifts whereby the soule labours to bear back the power of the Word, may be reduced to these three heads.

1. Shift.
How the soule labours to bear back the power of the word.

First, the soule hath a slight apprehension of sin, and thinketh that it is not so haynous, and so dangerous, as those hot spirited Ministers beare men in hand; this is usually the common conceit of all men naturally, and even of us all, more or lesse, to make a slight account of sinne, and that for these foure respects.

Why men make slight account of sinne.

First, in respect of the commonnesse of it; because that every man is guilty of it, wee slight it; what saith one; Good now, what then, are not all sinners, as well as we? though we have many failings, yet we have many fellows.

I.

If we were drunkards, or whoremongers, then it were

were somewhat? Thou sayest true indeed, thou hast many fellowes in thy sins, and thou shalt have share with many fellowes in the punishment to come; there is roome enough in hell for thee and all thy fellowes, hell hath opened her mouth wide; nay, the more companions thou hast had in thy sinnes, the more shall be thy plagues.

O (saith one) all the world lies in sinne, and wee doe no more than the world doth.

But if the world lies in sin, Christ never prayed for the world, and hee will never save the world; What a senselesse thing is this to be such a one as God hates? Is this all thy pleasure, that thou art a hater of God? What ods is it for a man to be stabbed with a penknife, or with a speare; or for a man to be murdered in the streetes, or in his bed? so, though thy sinnes be not hidious blasphemies, and the like, yet if they be petty oathes, they are enough to sinke thy soule; It is not your great swearer, but no swearer shall come into the Kingdome of heaven. The text saith not, no great liers shall enter into heaven, but *no* liers shall enter into heaven; What difference is there betweene a man that goes to hell for open rebellion; and a man that goes to hell for civill profession? and what difference is there betweene an open adulterer and a secret adulterer?

But some will say, Are not all sinfull by nature? and are not some saved: and why not I as well as others?

For answer, I say, no man is saved by nature: but if any be saved, the Lord opens his eyes, and

Quest.

Answ.

Quest.

Answ.

breakes his heart, and so it must be with thee too, if ever thou thinkest to receive any mercy from God.

Secondly, there is also a naturalnesse in a sinfull course, therefore say not, it is my nature and infirmity, and I am of a cholericke disposition, I shall sometimes sweare, when I am angry; and I cannot but be drunke sometimes, when I light into good company. What, would you have us Saints on earth? I, either Saints or Devils, never sanctified, never saved; never purged, never glorified, as the Apostle Saint *Iohn* saith, *Hee that hath this hope purgeth himselfe, as he is pure*; he striveth with his whole endeavour to be pure, and alwayes hee hath a respect to all Gods commandements; And as the Author to the *Hebrewes* saith, *Pursue faith and holinesse, without which no man can be saved.*

Quest.

Answ.

1 Ioh. 3.

Heb. 12.

14.

If thou dost say, if it were an honour to pray in my family, and if Gentlemen and Knights did it, I would doe it. I tell thee, if *holinesse* doth seeme to fly away by disgrace & persecution, then you must *pursue it*; Nay, dost thou say it is thy nature to sin? Then I say the greater is thy wickednesse, if it be thy nature so to doe: We hate not a man because he drinks poyson, but we hate a Toad because it is of a poysonous nature; therefore rather mourne the more for thy sinnes, because it is thy cursed nature so to doe; And say, *Lord*, did onely temptations, or the world, allure me to this, there were some hope that thou wouldest have mercie upon mee: but, O *Lord*, I have a cursed nature, and though there were no Devills, nor world, no temptations outwardly, yet this cursed nature

ture of mine would sinne against thee.

They that have received Christ, have a new nature: and therefore if I have a carnall corrupt nature: then my condition is most fearefull. And say, did temptations & the world allure me; then there were some hope of mercy; but it is my nature to sinne, and therefore my estate and condition is most miserable and wretched: *Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?*

Thirdly, many say words are but winde, and all this winde shakes no corne; And so when we presse men to the inward worke of the soule, not onely to keepe men from the halter; but to tell them, they must pull downe their proud hearts, and be humbled for their sinnes, and the like; then they reply, thoughts fly away suddenly, and thoughts are free. To which I answer; these words are such winde, as will blow downe thy soule into the bottomlesse pit of hell. It is not I that say so, but our Saviour himselfe, *By thy words thou shalt be justified; and by thy words thou shalt be condemned:* Though you make nothing of your swearing, and idle thoughts, and revilings of Gods people; yet the God of heaven will require them at your hands; and you shall either receive acquittance from Christ of them, or else vengeance for ever for them: *For the Lord commeth with thousands of his Saints in flaming fire to punish,* not onely murderers and adulterers, and the like, but *all ungodly ones;* the Lord will call thee to an accompt for all thy abominations; nay, for all thy speeches against the people of God, upon thy Ale-bench when thou didst toss them too and fro,

Rom. 7.

3.

Math. 12.
37.

Iud. 15.

Psal. 50.

fro, and the Lord will set thy finnes in order before thee; nay, hee will call thee to an account for them, for all thy thoughts, though they are sudden and quickly passed over, as the Prophet *Jeremiah* saith: *O Ierusalem, wash thy heart from wickednesse, how long shall thy vaine thoughts remaine in thee?* Whatsoever men thinke of thoughts, yet they are the very life and sinewes of sinne, and they are brought forth by meditation of a mans corruptions in this kinde.

How sinful
thoughts
are pro-
duced.

A man may sinne more in thought than in any other kinde whatsoever; both in regard of the vile-nesse of sinne, and his unavoydablenesse thereof. A theefe cannot rob all the towne, but a covetous man may wish all in the towne were hanged, that he might have their goods; and so an adulterer cannot commit sinne with every woman in the towne, but hee may lust after both, the godly and prophane, and he may commit adultery both with the chaste and unchaste too in his thoughts; A man may sinne infinitely in this kinde, and never have done: for no company nor place can hinder an adulterer from sinning and lusting, nor the malicious man from envying in his heart, nor the covetous man from desiring the goods of other men. Though thou dardest not cut the throat of a Minister, yet thou canst malice all the Ministers in the Countrey.

4.

Fourthly, the soule hath a strange inward resolution of cleaving to sinne, whatsoever can be said or done to the contrary. And this inward resolution of the soule hath a delight in corruptions, though

though hee die, and be damned for the same; this plucketh the heart from the Word, and layeth so many mists upon the understanding, that it cannot see the truth; when the soule hath nothing to say for it selfe, it falls to open and profest reviling of Jesus Christ, and defying of him; and hence it is, that after many good arguments the soule stands as it were at a set; and saith, I will not beleieve it though there were five thousand Ministers to perswade me to it: and why doth he so? hath he any argument to alledge? No, not a word, but he that is proud will be proud, and he that is a sweareer will sweare, and will not make conscience of any thing; this comes from a proud and a sturdy heart. When *Jeremiah* would have convinced the people of their sinnes, and of the punishments threatned to them, they said, *Thou speakest falsely, there is no such matter*: So it is with many a carnall heart now a dayes; if the Minister of God will not please their phantasies, then all the businesse is, They knew all this before: when as indeed they knew nothing at all. Therefore, saith God, *Take heed there be not in any of you a roote of bitterness, if the soule beareth the law and blesteth himselfe in his wickednesse, and saith, I shall have peace though I walke after the imaginations of my owne heart; the Lord will not spare that man; but the jealousie of the Lord shall smooke against him; this roote of bitterness is nothing else but sinne, and a resolution to continue in it: For the Lord Jesus sake consider this; there are too many of these in the Congregation; wilt thou not beleieve Gods word, I tell thee thou deniest almost that there is a God,*

Ier. 43. 2.

Deu. 18.
18. 19.

God; and thou renounceest the Lord Jesus Christ and salvation by him; thou sayest in effect, there is no God, and that there is not any meanes of grace revealed: What devilish blasphemy is this? Let me speake to the terror of all such hearts, hell never entertained any such thoughts, the devils in hell for ought I know, have not any such profest resolutions, *the devils beleeve and tremble*; the devils beleeve that the *Scriptures* are the word of God, and they know there is infinite mercy in God; but they shall never taste of it, and they know, all the plagues threatned shall come upon them, and they shake and tremble at the remembrance of it. What, doe the devils consent to the word of God, and conceive of it, and know that it is the truth of God, and shall be made good upon them? Then good Lord, of what a strange remper art thou, that wilt not beleeve it, and that wilt not consent that it is true? the devill is not worse than thou art in this case: I must confesse that the consideration of these passages sometime makes the soule of a poore Minister shake within him; and were it in my power as it is not, the first worke that I would doe, should be to humble and breake the hearts of all such vile wretches; but all that I can or will doe, is this, that which the holy man *Moses* spake, and hee spake it with a mervailous caution; you that never came to the height of this horrible contempt, *take heed that there be not any man among you, that saith, It shall goe well with mee whatsoever the Minister saith.* It is as much as your soules are worth: and to such as are guilty of this sinne I will give the same counsell that

that *Peter* gave to *Simon Magus*, who had a base esteeme of the gifts of the Spirit: O (saith *Peter*) pray that if it be possible, the thoughts of thy heart may be forgiven thee. It is a fearefull thing, it is a mervailous opposing of grace; And for you, whose eyes God hath opened, goe home and consider of the miserable estate of all such as lie in this sinne; goe to prayer, and send up requests in the behalfe of all such poore creatures; and say, Is it so Lord, that there are many such who have the name of Christians, that will not be reformed nor humbled? Good Lord! that many, that have the name of Christians, will not come in; thy word will not prevaile nor take place in their hearts? Good Lord breake their hearts in pieces, breake in upon them, and let thy Word overcome them in mercy and compassion; and bring them to the true knowledge of sinne here, and happinesse hereafter. And thus much of the first cavill.

Secondly, the soule saith, I confesse I see more now than ever I conceived of before; I did not conceive that sinne was so haynous, and so dangerous as it is: Now I see it is mervailous great and dangerous; yet this is my hope, that whatsoever falls, it will not light upon me; and therefore what need I care, I hope to prevent it, and then all will bee well. When the Word comes faire and full upon the conscience of a man, and would pierce his heart, and meetes him in every place as the Angell did *Balaam*, hee will have some fetch or other to put by the Word, and hee sayes; I hope for all this, the danger shall not fall upon me. Now the way

Acts 8 21.

2. Shift.

How the
soule puts
by, the
threat-
nings of
the word,

I.

way that the soule useth to put by the word, and to prevent the danger threatned, appears in these three particulars.

The first is this, how ever sinne is never so vile in it selfe, and he is guilty thereof; yet hee thinks the God of heaven doth not attend to his finnes, or else he is not so just or righteous, that hee will punish him for them. Indeed, if he were some notorious wretch, as a murderer, or an adulterer, or a theefe, or such like, then he had cause to feare, but God will not bring him to an account for every small sinne; That this is the sleight of the soule, I will shew you; and then shew you how to avoid it.

Ioh 22. 13.

It is ordinary with every carnall heart more or lesse, to reason as *Eliphaz with Iob*; *How doth God know? can he judge through the darke? thicke cloudea are a covering to him that hee seeth not, hee walketh in the circuits of heaven.* It is the guise of wicked men to say so: Nay, it is that which the hearts of Gods people are driven to a stand withall, when they consider the passages of wicked men; now God seeth them and doth not punish them, they say, How doth God know? and, *Is there knowledge in the Almighty?* When the *Prophet* saw the way of the wicked to prosper, their eyes to start out with fatnesse, he saith, *Doth God see this, and not punish it?* as if hee had said, Did God care for all that is done here below, could hee brooke such strange oppositions of his word, and his Gospell, and his members? I doubt not, but that there is many an adulterous heart, that thinks a dark night shall cover all his abominations; and the malicious man

man that contrives evill against Gods children, hee thinkes that God considers not his course; or else that God wil not trouble himselfe to execute judgement upon him for all his sins. As the *Prophet* saith, The Lord wil not doe *Good* nor *Evill*; he is mervailous quiet, he wil not trouble himselfe, neither for the good that doth befall, nor for the evill that is deserved by us: Nay, this is the bane of our Ministry, when people heare of many judgements denounced against sin & sinners (I tell you what they think of all this) they think they are words of course. If the adulterer or drunkard did consider that no such person should inherit the kingdome of heaven, durst they goe on? surely no. But they think they are but the words of some hot spirited Minister, to awe, and scare men, and keepe them in compasse, and they will not be perswaded, but God is more mercifull then so, that hee should punish for every small sinne, they think this is more than reasonable; *Let him make speede* (saith the wicked) *that wee may see it, and let the counsell of the most high draw nigh; that wee may know it.* As if they had said, You Ministers tell us much of Gods wrath against *Ierusalem*, let us see those enemies, and let the word of the Lord come to passe now, all these words are but winde, &c. These are the carnall cavills of gracelesse persons. To which I answer; It is desperate ignorance, and mervailous Atheisme of heart, whereby the devill labours to keepe men in sin; the Lord knows thy thoughts long before; if thou wouldest hide thy selfe from the Lord in the darke, the day and the night are all one with him; nay, the Lord will

Esay 5. 19.

Zeph. I.
12.

will search Ierusalem with candles: the word in the
 originall signifies to tracke her; Nay, hee wil not
 leave searching till he finde thee out; for the wayes
 of man are before the Lord, and he ponders all his doings,
 and if our hearts condemne us, God knoweth all things,
 and is greater then our hearts. Doth thy Conscience
 check thee for vaine thoughts, and cursed devices?
 then God knoweth much more by thee than thou
 knowest by thy selfe. God did see Achan stealing
 the wedge of gold, and David in his adultery; and he
 seeth all the malice of thy heart against his Saints;
 and all thy uprising of heart against Gods word:
 Nay, the Lord seeth all the pranks of the adulterer
 in the darkest night; and God is just to bring all
 things to judgement, and thee also to an accompt
 for them; In vaine it is for wicked men to digge deepe,
 to hide their counsell from the Lord: These things hast
 thou done (saide God) and I kept silence, and therefore thou
 thoughtest I was altogether such a one as thy selfe, but I
 will reprove thee, and set all thy sinnes in order before
 thee.

You must not thinke God is so gentle; No, hee
 will set all your sinnes in order before you, if not
 here for your humiliation, yet hereafter for your
 everlasting confusion; the drunkard shall then see
 all his pot-companions, and the adulterer his mates,
 and the unjust person all his trickes; nay, God will
 not bate thee one thought of thy heart; be where
 you will, God will finde you out with his judge-
 ments, and say, Lo, here is thy pride, and here is thy
 murther, and here are all thy abominations; this is
 the wretch that could carry fire in one hand, and
 water

pro. 5. 11.

1 Ioh. 3. 20

Psalme 50.

Rom. 2.

14.

Iude 15.

water in the other; these are thy finnes, and this shall be thy punishment.

Secondly, if God be so mighty (say they) that he knowes all, and will call us to an accompt for all; then is it but sorrowing so much the more; and that wee will doe afterwards, and this will make all well enough, it is but repenting. To this I answer; Doe you make a but at it? he not deceived, *God is not*; nay, cannot be mocked, and therefore delude not your owne soules, every repentance will not serve the turne; thou mayest have remorse of heart, and repent, and cry to God for thy finnes, and this tormenting of thy heart will be but a fore-runner of thy everlasting damnation hereafter: the Lord may deal with thee as *Moses* said of the people of *Israel*, *You returned and wept before the Lord, but he would not hearken to your voice.* So the time may come that all weeping and wailing will not serve the turne. You see *Judas* wept, and brought backe the thirty pieces of silver, hee had mervailous horror of conscience, hee tooke shame to himselfe, and made restitution; and yet a damned creature for ever.

Thou that thinkest it such an easie matter, aske thy owne heart this question: Canst thou be content to lay open all thy cursed sinfull courses, and all the wrong that thou hast done: Consider what a hard matter it is to bring thy heart to it; to confesse all thy close adulteries; and when thou hast done all this, thou mayest be as farre from salvation as *Judas* was, who went and hanged himselfe; therefore it is not every sorrow will serve the turne, and

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bring

2.
Object.

Answ.

Deu. 1. 14.

Mat. 27. 3.

bring comfort to thy soule ; but it must be repentance of the right stampe : And againe, dost thou thinke thou hast repentance at command ; this is that which cuts the throat of mens soules, and deprives them of all the benefit of the means of grace ; thou art not sure, though thou shalt live, thou hast power of thy selfe to repent savingly ; and shall any man be so senselesse , as to hang his happinesse on that which cannot helpe him ? If thou didst consider thy owne weakenesse, thou wouldest not say, that repentance is in thine owne power. Remen ber what the *Apostle* saith, *Proving if peradventure at any time God would give repentance, that they may acknowledge the truth, and come to amendment of life out of the snare of the devill.* It is onely but peradventure, it is a rare worke, and few have it.

2 Tim 2.
25. 26.

3.
Quest.
Ans.

Thirdly, some will say, God may give me repentance, Christ came into the world to save sinners, and why may he not save mee ? I answer, Is that all ? is it come to this ? And who knowes but that God may damne thee too ? if that be all, why may you not say more truly ; what know I, but that God may give me up to a hard heart, and a blinde minde for ever, and I may for ever be cast out of the presence of God ? is it but, *It may be all this while ?* And therefore for a full answer, consider these two things to shake off this carnall security, whereby men resolve to pin their salvation on Gods mercie, though they purpose to oppose his mercy. First, know this, that there is a time when God will not shew mercy ? Behold, saith God, *I gave her a time of repentance, but she repented not, therefore I will cast her*

Revel. 1.
21. 22.

upon

upon the bed of sicknesse: and as our Saviour saith to Ierusalem, *Oh that thou hadst knowne in this thy day, the things belonging to thy peace; but now they are hid from thy eyes.* God had sealed up his mercy, and the day of salvation was past, and when the day is over, though Noah, Daniel, and Job, should pray for a people they should save neither sonne nor daughter: And if thy Father did pray for thee that art a childe, if mercy be past, the Lord will not spare that man, saith the text: as if the Lord had said, I have abundance of mercy, but thou shalt never taste of it; nay, for ought I know, the Lord may set a seale of condemnation upon thee, and so give thee over to all evill, to all sinne, to all curses; and blot out thy name from under heaven: Are you yet perswaded that this is Gods word? If you were but perswaded of the sorrow some have had, it would make you looke about you; The Wise man saith, *That wisdom professeth to poure out abundance of mercy, saying, Oh you simple ones, how long will you contemne and despise purity and holinesse?*

Now marke, when a people hath had this mercy, and wisdom offered to them, and yet they will despise it; then shall they cry, and call, but I will not answer (saith God) *they shall seeke mee early, but shall not finde me.* The period of Gods patience is come to an end, & there is no expectation of mercy; Call, and call you may, but God will not heare you; you, whose consciences lie in your faces, and tell you, that you have despised mercy, and you would none of Gods Counsells, and you hate the knowledge of his wayes: Doe you think to get it now by crying,

Luk. 19. 43.

Ezek. 14.
14.

Pro. 1. 38.

when the date of mercy is out? No, no, you would have none of Gods mercy before, and now he will none of you: Doe you thinke it fit, that grace, and mercy, and the spirit, should still stand and waite upon you, and strive, and alwayes be despised? Is it not mervailous just, that that word which you have despised, should never worke more; and that mercy you have refused, should never be offered to you any more? It is just, and you shall finde it so in the end, and take heede the termes of mercy be not out.

4.

Lastly, if we cannot avoyde it, then we are resolved to beare it as we may; if we be damned, we shal undergoe it as we are able. This is that wee poore Ministers find too often by woefull experience, that when wee have taken away all cavills from wicked men; and then if we could weepe over them, and mourne for them, and beseech them to consider of it a right: Marke what they say, Good sir, spare your paines, wee are sinners, and if wee be damned, then every tub must stand upon his owne bottome; wee will beare it as well as wee can: What, is the wind in that doore? Is that all you can say? O woe to thee that ever thou wert borne! O poore creature! if I should cease speaking, and all of us joyne together in weeping, and lamenting thy condition, it were the best course; It is impossible thou shouldst ever beare Gods wrath with any comfort. And let these three considerations be remembered and retained, which wil make any man come to a stand, even the vilest wretches who will blaspheme and sweare, and if they bee damned (they say) they have

have borne something, and they will also beare this as well as they can.

First, judge the Lyn by the pawe, judge the torments of hell by some little beginnings of it; and the dregs of Gods vengeance; by some little sips of it; And judge how unable thou art to beare the whole by thy inability to beare a little of it in this life, in the terrour of conscience (as the Wiseman saith) *A wounded spirit who can beare?* When God layes the flashes of hell fire upon thy soule, thou canst not endure it: whatsoever a man can inflict upon a poore wretch, may be borne; but when the *Almighty* comes in *bataille array* against a poore soule, how can he undergoe it? witnesse the *Saints* that have felt it, as also witnesse the wicked themselves, that have had some beginnings of hell in their consciences. When the Lord hath let in a little horror of heart into the soule of a poore sinfull creature, how is he transported with an insupportable burthen? *When it is day, he wisheth it were night, and when it is night, he wisheth it were day.* All the friends in the world cannot comfort him; nay, many have sought to hang themselves, to doe any thing rather than to suffer a little vengeance of the *Almighty*: And one man is roaring and yelling, as if he were now in hell already, & admits of no comfort: If the drops be so heauey, what will the whole sea of Gods vengeance be? If he cannot beare the one, how can he beare the other?

Secondly, consider thine owne strength, and compare it with all the strength of the creatures, and so if all the creatures be not able to beare the wrath of

Iob 6.12.

the Almighty, (as Iob saith) Is my strength the strength of stones, or is my flesh as brasſe that must beare thy wrath? As if hee had said, It must be a stone, or brasſe, that must beare thy wrath. Though thou wert as strong as brasſe or stones, thou couldst not beare it: when the mountaines tremble at the wrath of the Lord, shall a poore worme or bubble, and a shadow endure it?

Conceive thus much, if all the diseases in the world did sease on one man, and if all the torments that all the tyrants in the world could devise, were cast upon him; and if all the creatures in heaven and earth did conspire the destruction of this man, and if all the devils in hell did labour to inflict punishments upon him; you would think this man to be in a miserable condition. And yet all this is but a beame of Gods indignation. If the beames of Gods wrath be so hot, what is the full sunne of his wrath, when it shall sease upon the soule of a sinfull creature in full measure?

3.

Nay, if yet thou thinkest to lift up thy selfe above all creatures, and to beare more than they all; then set before thine eyes the sufferings of the Lord Iesus Christ, he that creates the heavens, and upholds the whole frame thereof, when the wrath of God came upon him, onely as a surety, he cries out with his eyes full of teares, and his heart full of sorrow, and the heavens full of lamentation, *My God, my God; why hast thou forsaken mee?* Oh thou poore creature, if thou hast the heart of a man, gird up the loynes of thy minde, and see what thou canst doe? Doeſt thou thinke to beare that which the

Math. 27.
46.

the Lord Jesus Christ could not beate without so much sorrow? Yet he did endure it without any sinne or weakenesse; hee had three sips of the Cup, and every one of them did sinke his soule; and art thou a poore sinfull wretch, able to beare the wrath of God for ever?

That I may the better prevaile with you, consider these three motives; first, it is the onely old way to heaven, for God never revealed any other but this way in the old Law: the onely way for the leaper to be cleansed, was to come out into the congregation, and to cry, *I am uncleane, I am uncleane.* This leaper was every sinner; this meanes of curing was the sight of his sinne; and as hee did, so must every sinner confesse his sinne, take shame to himselfe, and say, *It is my proud heart, and this my loose life, &c.* This true sight of sinne is the onely doore to life and salvation: who would not goe that way, which is the right and the ready way? if ever you receive mercy at the hands of the Lord, it must be by this way, or not at all. I pray you take heed, and doe not finde a shorter cut to heaven; the further you goe the contrary way, the further you must returne back againe; this hath cozened many a man more than he doth imagine.

As a travailer when hee is loath to goe through some filthy Lane, he will breake through the fence, and goe through the meadow; that hee may save the foule way, at last when hee hath gone up and downe, and cannot get out againe, hee is forced with much losse of time to goe backe againe, and goe through the Lane. So it is with many sinfull

Motive
1.

Luk. 19. 10

Lam. 3. 40.

Motive
2.

wretches in the world, and this hath cost them deare. They will not goe this way, by sorrow for sinne to see the filthinesse thereof, and their cursed abominations: but they will have a new way to receive mercy and comfort from God, yet at last they are driven to a stand, and then they will heare the Minister of God, and when he saith, Christ came to seeke, and to save that which was lost, that is, those poore sinners that saw themselves lost, and consider the plagues of their heart; And when Christ works savingly, he opens the eye, and awakens the conscience, and a man must confesse before hee can finde mercy, then the soule saith, I never saw this worke upon my soule, I was never lost. No? where broke you over then? you would needs to heaven a new way; you are like the thornie ground that would receive the word with joy: Nay, He assure you, you must come backe againe, and see all those abominations which have beene committed in secret by you and discover them, or else there is no meanes to come unto life; *Let us search and try our wayes.* (saith the Church) you must not thinke that Christ will pardon all, and you doe nothing; No, first see your finnes, and then you shall receive mercie and pardon for them.

Secondly, the worke by this meanes will bee much more easie then at another time. If thou once get thy conscience convicted, and thine eyes opened, the worke will goe on earely and easly: Many of Gods people will strike in with you, and many good Christians will pitty you, and pray for you, and you shall have many helps this way, and there-

therefore is it not better now to have your conscience awakened when you may have helpe, then afterward when there is no remedy? When any of Gods people fast or pray, they will remember you; what saith one? Doe you know such a man? yes very well: what is hee? Oh hee was the most shamelesse drunkard that ever the sunne did see, or the earth beare. Was he so? Oh but now God hath opened his eyes, and awakened his conscience, he was never so frolike before, but now he is as much wounded, now his heart is broken, and his conscience flies in his face; It were good to remember him, though he hath beene a wretch, and a profest opposer of Gods people, yet let us remember him; Yes that I will, I know his burthen is great, I have found it; and I hope so long as I have a knee to kneele, and a tongue to speake, I shall remember him. And then they pray for him, and say, Good Lord, who can beare a wounded soule? Good Lord thou hast humbled him, and made him see himselfe vile and miserable, let him see thy mercy in Christ. What a comfort is this to have a whole Country pray for him in this manner.

But some will object, This is something dangerous, and drives men to a desperate stand, therefore is it not farre better to be as wee are, and not to awake this severe Lyon; A man cannot conjure downe his conscience when it is up once.

I answer: you must see your sinnes, that is the truth of it, doe not think to put it off, the Lyon will roare; and your conscience will be awakened one day; it is better to be awakened now, then to have
your

Object.

Answer.

Motive

3.

your eyes opened in hell when there is no remedy.

Thirdly, set upon this worke, the issue will be very successefull: oh what a comfort will it be to a poore soule in the time of death, when he shal come to render up his soule into the hands of God, that all his sins are wiped out: And then to heare those glad tidings from heaven; Be of good comfort poore soule, thou hast seene thy sinnes, therefore I will not see them; thou hast remembered them, and mourned for them, therefore I will never plague thee for them. Who would not see his sinnes that Christ may cover them in that day of accompts? there was never sinner broken hearted but God did bind him up: and there was never any truly wounded for sinne, but God did ever heale and comfort him; and therefore labour to looke your face in the glasse of Gods Law, and so see your own spots; I confesse this is tedious to your sinnes, and the plagues due to them; but looke thou on them, that God may not. If an adversary offer meanes of agreement, we use to say, suffer it not to come to the publike triall, for the case is naught; I say it will be so with every wicked mans case, the Lord hath a controversie with every wicked man, and it must be tryed in the publike day of judgement, or else you must make a private agreement betwene God and your owne soules; If there be any drunkard, or adulterer, or unjust person, that is guilty of any sin, you had better take up the matter in private: Doe not feare to looke upon your sinnes, but bring them all out before the Lord, and see the ugly face of them, and intreate the Lord to seale up unto you the

the pardon of them, that you may never be called to an accompt for them; I tell you, it is the most comfortable course in the world.

The last use for instruction to all my fellow brethren: let me speak a word to them and to my selfe too; let us all take that course in dealing with the people, and Gods ordinances, which God himselfe takes up; As the steward disposeth of every thing at his Masters will, and the Apothecary orders drugs as the Physitian appoints, so let it be with us too: we are but stewards and Apothecaries; let us take that course, & use those means that God hath appointed for his peoples good; God saith, you must see your sins, and be humbled for them: and therefore let us labour to make men see them, (as the Apostle saith, *I hope we were made manifest to your consciences*; Did not your consciences say so, that you could not gain-say it?) we must take up that course the Scripture hath revealed, and which the faithfull servants of God have ever used, and which God hath ever blessed: nay, it is our wisdom so to doe. *Mathew* the seventh and the last, Christ taught the people with *authority*, not as the *Scribes*: there is a kinde of commanding power which the word ought to have upon mens consciences, if a man be a sinner it wil reprove him, and command reproofes to sease upon him, and if he be in distresse of conscience, it will command comfort to take place in his heart.

Give me leave to speake my thoughts, and it is my judgement too: What doth it profite a man to scrape up a little Greeke and Latine together, and to leave the sense of the Scripture undiscovered,

and

Use.

2 Cor. 3. 2.

Mat. 7. ult.

Mat. 7. ult.

Mat. 7. ult.

Mat. 7. ult.

and the conscience no whit touched, nor the heart stirred? He that knowes any thing this way, though he were but an ordinary schoole-boy, that had but any skill in the tongues, if he could not doe it, hee should be scourged by my consent. But let it be in case of conscience, a poore soule comes to anguish of spirit, the onely way to set this man on foote againe, is to answer all his objections and questions; and resolve all his doubts, and to make the way good, and the case cleare: Alas, this course is not knowne amongst us: And in the way of examination, if a man come to examine a sinner, hee takes away all his cavils, and all his carnall shifts, that hee hath to hinder the word, and forces the soule to say, It is Gods word, though hee will not entertaine it. Let a man try this course, and he shall finde a mervailous difficulty; this is the reason why our ministry thrives not, and the hearts of men are not wrought upon; because wee labour not the right way, to shew men their sins, and to convince their conscience, that they may not flinch out from the ordinances of God: Nay, I take it to be the speciall cause, why after all the pretious promises that God makes knowne, no man receives good by them: Wee offer selves to them that know not whether they have any sores or no; And we offer Physicke to those that we know not whether they have any disease or no; wee speake of grace and Christ, but people thinke they have no neede of them; suffer me so speake my minde herein freely. That ministry which doth not ordinarily humble the soule, and breake the heart for sinne, doth

Why mens
hearts
are not
wrought
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strie.

not convert and draw home to Christ.

Now we come to shew the causes why, and the means how sinners come to see their finnes. The *Apostle* speaks it to their faces, *You are they that have committed this sinne; you have crucified the Lord of life; this is your sinne.*

The Doctrine from hence is this: A speciall application of particular finnes, is a chiefe meanes to bring people to a sight of their finnes, and to a true sorrow for them. The *Apostle* doth not generally propound their finnes; but he comes home to their hearts, and it is not onely done in this place; but it hath beene the practise of all Gods faithful Ministers heretofore. As *John Baptist*, hee goes not runningly to worke, secretly to intimate some truths; but he deales roundly with them, and saith, *O generation of vipers, who fore warned you to flee from the wrath to come? And he shewes them their finnes in particular. And when the Publicans came to be baptised, he saith, Receive no more then is appointed for you; and he saith to the souldiers, Doe violence to no man, and be content with your wages; hee was the Minister of humiliation and preparation: and therefore he deales thus plainly with them.*

When *Ahab* had slaine *Naboth*, the Prophet *Elisha* came to him and sayes, *In the place where dogges lick the blood of Naboth shall dogges lick thy blood: Ahab said, Hast thou found mee out, O my enemy? And he said, I have found thee out, because thou hast sold thy selfe to worke wickednesse in the sight of the Lord; and the text saith, When he heard this, hee put on sackcloth and went softly: This was the power of a particular reproofe,*

Doctrine

Luk 3. 31.

12.

1 Reg. 20.

21.

Math. 23.

13. 14.

1. thus 1.

20.

Object.

Answ.

Hosea 2. 7.

Ezek. 16.

1.

Reason 1

reprooffe, though hee were a miserable wicked man. Thus did *Paul* deale with *Peter*, when hee halted before the Jewes, he did plainly reprove him to his face, and that not secretly, but because he had sinned openly, therefore he reproves him openly: so also our Saviour Christ shakes up the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*. And this is the rule in generall, as the *Apostle* saith, *Reprove them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith.*

Oh! but some will say, If I doe thus plainly deale with them, I shall discourage them altogether.

Nay, it will make them sound Christians indeed; see what the Lord saith, *Plead with your mother*: the word in the originall is, *Call her into the Court*, call her by her name, and say, that shee is not my wife, and I am not her husband. And the Lord saith by *Ezekiel*, *Sonne of man, cause Ierusalem to know her abominations*: hee doth not say, cause the Country to know her abominations, or the Country to know the finnes of the Court, but make *Ierusalem* know her owne abominations.

The reasons are these: First, because the word thus applyed hits sooner than otherwise it would. A Master commands a servant to doe such a thing, and because he names him not; one thinks it is not hee, and another it is not hee, onely because hee is not named: So when a Minister saith, *In many things we sinne all*, he hits no man, and so none are affected with it; But now particular application brings every mans part and portion, and not onely sets the dishafore him, but cuts him meate, and carves for him, and wee doe in this case as the Nurse doth with

with the child; hee not onely sets the meate before it, but hee minceth it, and puts it into the chilles mouth: the Steward doth not onely say, There is meate enough in the Market, but he buyes it, and brings it home, and sees it prepared, and gives direction what is for every one. The words of a faithfull Minister are like arrowes, which if they be shot a cock height, they fall downe againe and doe nothing: but when a man levels at a mark, then if ever, hee will hit it. So, many Ministers can tell a grave faire tale, and speake of sinnes in generall, and these common reprooves, these intimations of sin, are like arrowes shot a cock height, they touch no man; but when a Minister makes application of sin in particular, and saith, O all you drunkards and adulterers, this is your portion, and let this be a venome in your hearts to purge out your lusts. When our Saviour Christ lapped up the Pharisees all in one speech, it is said, that they heard the *parable*, and knew that he meant them.

Overly discourseth that men be great sinners, and the like are like the confused noise that was in the ship when *Jonah* was a sleepe in it, which never troubled him, till at last the Master came and said, *Arise, O Sleeper, and call upon thy God*; And as a father observes, they came about him, and every man had a blow at him, and then he did awake. So because of generall reprooves of sinne, and termes set off, men come to Church, and sit and sleepe, and are not touched nor troubled at all. But when particular application commeth home to the heart, and a Minister saith; This is thy drunkennesse, and thy adultery

Math 21.
45.

2nd 232

Jonah. 1.
6.

adulterie and prophanesse, and this will breake thy necke one day; what assurance hast thou got of Gods mercy? and what canst thou say for heaven? Then men begin to looke about them. There was never any convicting Ministry, nor any man that did in plainnesse apply the word home, but their people would be reformed by it, or else their consciences would be troubled; and desperately provoked to oppose God and his ordinances, that they may be plagued by it. The word of God is like a sword; the explanation of the text is like the drawing out of this sword, and the flourishing of it; and so long it never hits: But when a man strikes a full blow at a man, it either wounds or puts him to his fence: So the application of the Word is like the striking with the sword, it will worke one way or other, if a man can fence the blow, so it is: I confesse it is beyond our power to awaken the heart, but ordinarily this way doth good.

Reason 2

Secondly, as the word of God particularly applied hits soonest, so it sinkes deepest; the words of the wise are compared to *nayles fastened by the Masters of assemblies*; the Doctrine delivered is like the *nayles pointed*; but when it is cleare, and then particularly applied, it is like the setting on the *nayles* fast upon the hearts and consciences of men; And this I take to bee the reason why many that have come many times to oppose the Ministers of the Gospell; yet God hath broken in upon them, and humbled their hearts, and made them see their miserable condition.

The first use is for instruction; Here we find the reason

reason why plaine teaching findes such opposition, why it is so cavilled at, by all Ministers and others; because thereby the eye of the soule comes to be opened, and all mans abominations are discovered, and his conscience is pinched by the same; Our Saviour saith; *Hee that doth evil, hates the light, lest his dooers should be reproved*, as a theefe hates the light and the lantern-bearer, because they shew his villany; so they that are guilty of many sinfull courses, and base practises, hate the Minister that brings the word with any power to their soules. A malefactor at the Assises, can be content to see an hundred men in the towne, and is never troubled with them; but if hee sees one man that comes to give in evidence against him, and knowes his practises; Oh how his heart riseth with desperate indignation against that man. Oh, saith he, this is he that seekes my life, he will make my neck crack; so it is with this soule-saving Ministry, it is that which brings in a bill of inditement against a man. Now a man can be content to come, & heare though it be never so many Sermons; but if a Minister comes in for a witnesse against him, and begins to arraigne him, and to indite him, for his pride, and malice, and coverousnesse, and to convince him of them, and to lay him flat before the Lord, and his conscience: Oh then he is not able to beare it. What is the reason of this? Hee can heare others quietly, and say, Oh they are sweet men, they deale kindly and comfortably. Why? The masse bites not, (as the proverbe is) such a kinde of Ministry workes not at all, and this is the reason why they are not

F

troubled,

troubled, but goe away so well contented. I have sometime admired at this: why a company of Gentlemen, Yeomen, and poore women, that are scarcely able to know their A. B. C. yet they have a Minister to speake Latine, Greeke, and Hebrew, and to use the Fathers, when it is certaine, they know nothing at all. The reason is, because all this stings not, they may sic and sleepe in their fitties, and goe to hell hood-winckt, never awakened, and that is the reason they will welcome such to their houses, and say, Oh he is an excellent man, I would give anything I might live under his Ministry. It is just *Ahabs* old humour, hee could sute seasonably with *four hundred false Prophet's*; and if there had beene five thousand more, they should all have beene accepted of him: but when *Iehosaphat* said, Is there never another *Prophet* of the Lord: Oh yes (saith *Ahab*) *there is one Micaiah, but I hate him, hee never spake good to me*: that is, hee never sooths me up. So it was the temper of the people mentioned in the *Acts*, when the *Aposle* saw they were a rebellious people, hee deales plainly with them: but they cryed, *Away with such a fellow, he is not worthy to live*. What? said they, then it seemes wee shall be cast off from the Lord, & be his people no more, they were not able to beare that: people in this case deale with Gods faithfull Ministers as the widdow of *Sarepta* did, when the *Prophet* had told her, that the meale in the barrell, and the oyle in the cruse should not decrease, all this while he was welcome: but when her child was dead, *Oh what have I to doe with thee thou man of God?* thinking indeed that the *Prophet* had

Acts 4. 22.

1 Reg. 14.

had killed her sonne; So all the while wee set the doore wide open, that all the drunkards and adulterers in the Country may goe to heaven, you like us well enough, and we are as welcome as may be, and wee are meruailous good Preachers, and you think us fit for the Pulpit; but if we come once to lay sinne to your charge, and to threaten condemnation for it, and to say, If God be in heaven, you shall never come there, if you continue in your sinnes, oh then they are up in armes, and say as the widdow did, Are you come to slay our soules, and awaken our consciences? Beloyed, this argues a spirit that never found the power of the Word; But it is our duties, and we must doe it, and howsoeuer it is not accepted of the wicked, yet it shall find entertainment with God, and hee shall give us our reward at that great day.

Secondly, if particular application be so powerfull, and so profitable, let mee speake a word to my selfe, and to my fellow-brethren; It falls heavy on us that are not willing to practise the same, but rather oppose it in others that desire to doe it; this plaine and particular application, is accounted a matter of sillinesse, and want of wisdom, and rashnesse, and a thing which befits not a Pulpit, but a mans words must be sweet, and toothsome, and hee must have a tender hand over men whoeuer they be, be they never so prophane. Nay, I dare say, if the Devill himselfe were here, hee must not be troubled, Ministers must lay bolsters under mens heads, and low pillows under their elbowes, that they may sit easily, and not trouble

Use 2.

drunkards, and adulterers, but let them be still in their sinnes, and so let them goe downe to hell, this is that which the devill loves, and takes much content in. And it is certaine, if he could prevaile, no other course should be taken up: if a great man be present, or a patron that wee looke for a living from, (if my eares had not heard it, I could not have beleev'd it) it is strange to thinke how they daube this over. If their sinnes be so grosse that all the Congregation would cry shame, if hee did not reprove them, what will they say? reprove you we will not, we dare not, but beseech you and desire you as every man hath his infirmity; a word to the wise is sufficient, &c. I blame my selfe so farre as my base feare possesseth me: but brethren, what will become of preaching in conclusion, if this may take no place in the hearts of people; and yet notwithstanding all this, there is one thing to be considered, if these be but any upright hearted Minister, or sincere Christian that is more exact than ordinary, what will the carnall Ministers doe? though they have no reason in the text, no ground in the Word to warrant them; though they cannot condemn a poore Christian upon good grounds, yet they will invent new wayes, and wrest the Text to dishonour Gods name, and then in all bitterness they can vent themselves against faithfull Christians, and conscionable Ministers: and hence the hands of the wicked are strengthened, and the hearts of Gods people are much daunted; and the Gospell of Jesus Christ provailes not in the hearts of such as it is preached vnto.

Marke

Marke the severe command that the Apostle gives his Scholar *Timothy*, *I charge thee before God, and the Lord Iesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead; preach the word, be instant in season, and out of season, reprove, rebuke, (as if he had said) the stubborn hearts of men neede this specially reprovving, and therefore doing this, is the maine thing that God requires; and the maine end for which the Word serves. Sharp reproofes makes sound Christians.* He that heales overly, hurts more than he heales; Are there not many to be humbled? and are there not many lusts raiging in the hearts of men and women? Let us therefore throw away this shamefull hiding, and make our Ministry knowne to the soules of those to whom we speake.

But some will object against this preaching, that it is nothing but the rashnesse of mens spirits, a kind of rayling that fits not a Pulpit.

To this I answere, the Prophets of God ever used and practised it; and the holy Apostles which were inspired in an extraordinary measure of the spirit, did imitate Christ, and his Prophets: and God commanded *Esay* to lift up his voice, as a trumpet, and shew my people their transgressions, and the house of *Iacob* their sinnes.

That is; tell the drunkard and adulterer of their sinnes. Did Christ and his Apostles raile? Are these men onely wise? Oh fearefull, that the soules of men should be so desperately transported against the truth of God, you that have had any such thoughts against the power of God, in the Ministry of the Word, repent, and pray, that if it be possible

2 Tim. 4. 1

Titus 1. 13.

Object.

Answ.

As 8. 2. 2. *fible the words of your mouthes, and thoughts of your hearts may be forgiven.* The Apostles, and Christ himselfe used this kinde of reaching : *Wee unto you Scribes and Pharisees* , seven-times together, if Christ had now lived, you would have said, hee had railed : Oh fearefull, I tell you this is the next sinne to the sinne against the holy Ghost.

Object. But secondly, they object, in this last age of the world there is a difference to be put; it is true, if men were not taught, this were necessary, but now in these times of knowledge what needs all this adoe? all those troubles and reproofes? what, shal we make men to be champlings, to mince their meat for them? no, set their meat, set the word before them, and they are wise enough to take their meat, and to apply the Word to themselves.

Answ. I confesse it is true, the Lord (blessed be his name) hath made his Word more evidently known then formerly, and yet there is a great deale of knowledge wanting in the most sort of men; nay, I can speake it by experience, that the meaner ordinary sort of people, it is incredible and unconceivable, what Ignorance is among them : Nay, I will be bold to justifie it, that hee that thinkes himselfe the wisest in understanding, if we come home to him by way of examination, wee shall make it knowne to him, that he knowes little or nothing of which he should and ought to know : But imagine men had the knowledge of the Word, that is not the maine end of preaching, to instruct men : but to worke upon their hearts. When a man hath taught men what they should doe, he is but come to the walls

walls of the Castle ; the fort is in the heart, the greatest worke of the Ministry is to pull downe the wills of men , that know the *truth of God*, and *hold it in unrighteousnesse* : Nay, they that doe know it, how dull are they in the performances of these duties God calls for at their hands, so that wee had not onely neede to mince their meat for them, but even to put it into their mouthes ; nay, they sleepe with meat in their mouthes : I appeale to you that are inlightned in the knowledge of the truth : doe you not find dulnesse of mind, & indisposednesse of spirit in the performances of those duties God calls for at your hands ? It was spoken by a reverend Divine , that the freest horse needes sometimes a spur to prick him forward : so I say, the best Christian needs a sharpe reproofe, to prick him forward in a Christian course.

But thirdly, if reason cannot prevaile, they dash this preaching out of countenance, and say, When men want matter, then they ransack mens consciences, and apply unto them their particular sinnes, and so they make up their Sermons.

I answer, then our Saviour *Iesus Christ* wanted matter, hee presseth their faults to the *Scribes* and *Pharises* seven times together ; nay, in the sixt of *Iohn* he presseth one truth nine times, his aime and end was, namely, that hee was *the bread of life* ; hee followeth it, and setleth it on them. Now in these mens judgements, *Christ* wanted matter, hee had not wherewith to spend the time, and therefore hee spake to the hearts of men, and came home to their consciences : but to say the truth, the ground

3.
Object.

Answ.

of their cavills that are cast against this kinde of preaching, is, because this troubles the hearts of those to whom wee *speake*, and brings vexation to the soules. Doe we want matter for our preaching? no, but this I say, it is an easie matter for any man to observe truthes out of a text, and to lay forth a point; this is an easie thing for any one that hath a judgement inlightened in the Scripture; but for a Minister of God in the worke of examination, to drive the soule of a carnall man to a stand, that he cannot escape; to make him goe away and hang the wings, insomuch that the soule shal be humbled, or else goe away & snarle at the truth, and reproofe delivered; Or for a man to uphold a soule in the time of trouble, to comfort it, and take away all doubts, I say this is the hardest matter for a Minister to accomplish under the Sunne.

Ife 3.

Thirdly, this should stirre up the hearts of all the people of God, to set an edge on their affections, to desire this manner of teaching, and when God maketh his truth thus knowne to us, we should subnit to the power thereof; You have most need of this, and there is most profit in this; and therefore your hearts ought to be more enlarged to the coveting and submitting thereto.

How to
profit in
hearing
the word
preached.

And therefore you that are hearers, suffer me to provoke you to it; when the time comes that you are to approach to the house of God, pray unto the Lord that he will direct you, and that the Minister may come home to your hearts, bring your hearts to the Word, as the people did their sacrifices in the old Law; they brought them, and laid them

them on the Altar, that the Priest might kill them, and divide them. So bring your hearts under the power of Jesus Christ, that they may be cut and divided, that you may be let blood in the right vein; that your corruptions may be subdued; that they may have their deaths wound given them; take up that resolution of the Prophet David; *I will heare what the Lord saith to my soule.* I will not heare what the Levit saith to the Courtier, or to the Commons; but I will see what the Lord saith to mee. Oh (say some) the Minister speaks home to such a one, hee touched him to the quick: What is that to thee? Will another mans salve cure thee? therefore labour that the Lord may come home to thy particular, that the Lord may salve thee, and cut thee, and save thee, for thy everlasting comfort.

Psa. 138.

You are wise for the things of this life; you will be content to part with any thing that may procure your comfort; if a father were now on his death bed making his Will, every childe would thinke, what doth my Father give mee? And if a man be bidden to a Feast, hee is not content onely to have the meat set before him; but if the Master of the feast will carve for him, hee will take it kindly. Every faithfull Minister is the father of the people, and they are his children; they are the Stewards of the Lords house, and give to every one their portion, terror to whom terror belongs, and comfort to whom comfort belongs.

Therefore when you come into the congregation, and see the Minister giving and parting to every one his dole; reprove here, and instruction

there;

there; looke up to heaven, and labour to get something to thy owne particular, and say as *Eſay* did in another caſe, *ſomething for mee*, Lord, *ſomething for mee*, inſtruct mee, reprove mee, make knowne my ſinnes, and diſcover my abominations.

When the dainties of ſalvation are diſtributing, you that are at the lower end of the Table, ſhould thinke with your ſelves, will the diſh never come to the lower end? Oh that the Lord would now guide the Miniſter, to lay his hand on the ſore of this curſed infidelity of minde? Oh, that the Lord would knocke downe that ſinne of mine this day: And if thy heart be any whit inlightened and touched, thou wilt be much contented and comforted; as *David* ſaid to *Abigail*, when ſhee came to diſſwade him from going againſt *Nabal* to deſtroy him; ſhee ſaid, *Vpon mee my Lord be this iniquity: why? Blessed be God (ſaith David) that ſent thee this day to meet me, and bleſſed be thy counſell, which hath kept mee this day from domming to ſhed blood, and avenging my ſelfe.*

2 Sam. 24.
25.

So if thou haſt a good heart, thou wilt not goe away repynning and fretting at the Word, and ſay, the Miniſter meant mee, and croſſeth mee: Take heed of this temper of heart, and if God be pleaſed to carve out to any man thoſe particular fruits that concerne his good: goe away and bleſſe the Lord, and ſay, *Bleſſed be his good word*, and his poore ſervant that met this day with my ſinnes; I never obſerved that pride, I never obſerved that malice, I never diſcovered that careleſſneſſe. What became of Chriſt I cared not; what became of his Miniſters I reſpected

respected not : what became of his name I regarded not : but the Lord hath shewed mee my finnes ; and blessed be God for that good worke which hath beene communicated to my soule by his servant.

And observe this, so farre as the heart is fearfull that the Minister should meeete with his finnes, so farre the heart is naught: Nay, if it be thus, if your consciences testifie against you, that you are loath to have your sins dealt roundly withall ; you thinke the Ministers should be mild, and not use such bitter reprehensions, and sharpe reproofes : I beseech you thinke of it seriously, you deale with your sins in this kinde as *David* did with *Absolon* : when *Isab* was to goe out, he gives him charge to use him kindly and gently ; that is, doe not kill him, but take him prisoner, that was his speech, *Deale kindly for my sake with the young man Absolon.*

Dost thou deale so with thy finnes ? thou wouldest have the Minister deale kindly with drunkenness and adultery, and malice ; doe not kill drunkenness, but onely take him prisoner, keep him in, reforme the outward face of drunkenness, that we may not bee drunken in the open streetes, but in a corner, and so that men may not sweare every turne, but when they come among Gentlemen that they doe it cunningly.

The case is cleare, thy soule if it be of this temper, it never hated sinne, it never sorrowed for sin, it never found the word of God working upon it for the subduing of sinne.

Imagine there were a traytor or rebell come into

A naughty heart discovered.

1 Sam. 18. 6.

How to
knowe
whether
we hate
sinne.

into the Towne, that sought to take away the Kings life; nay, suppose he were thy enemy or the like; will any one say that man hates an enemy, that cannot endure to have an enemy discovered, attached, and brought to execution? No sure, but hee loves him, he covers him, he hides him, and would not have him knowne, hee is a lover of a traytor, and a traytor himsele: else why doe you harbour a traytor; you cover him that hee cannot come to judgement, and therefore you are a friend unto him: so it is in this case; Canst thou say that thou hatest sin, thou hatest malice, and covetousnesse, and loosenesse, and prophanenesse; and in the meane time, thy soule saith, I cannot endure that the Minister should discover these, I cannot endure that hee should attach them, and arrest my soule for my covetousnesse, and adultery, and the like? My heart riseth, and I would cover it, and hide it; nay, I can beare it out sometimes, and say, the traytor is not here, I am not the drunkard, I am not the adulterer you talke of; but if the Minister will pursue thy soule, then thou shuttest the doore against him: If it be thus with thee, I tell thee thou art a friend to the traytor, thou never hatedst thy sinne, thou wert never yet brought to a true sight or sorrow for it.

Wee will now proceede: *When they heard this*, saith the text, the word in the originall carrieth a continuall act; when they had heard, there was not an end, but the sting of the Word did still stick in their hearts. When they walked on the way, *that* founded in their eares, *I have crucified the Lord of life;*

life; and when they lay downe, *that came into their* mindes, I have shed the blood of the Lord; and when they arose, this was their first thought, I have consented thereunto, and imbrewed my hands therein, this stuck upon the spirits of them, and the sting of the truth would not away, but after they had heard it, it remained still in their hearts.

The doctrine is this, That serious meditation of our sinnes by the word of God, is a speciall meanes to breake our hearts for our sinnes. *After they had heard,* (this notes a continuall action,) the truth of God still stuck in their stomackes; the arrowes of God would not out, the *Apostle* shot some secret shot into their soules, which came home to their hearts and consciences, *when they heard this*: that is, the musing, and meditating, and pondering of this, when they could hold no longer, they could beare no more, but came to the *Apostles*, and said, *what shall we doe?* Sometimes God brings a man into the Church to carpe at the Minister, and to see what hee may have against him: now if the Lord sting the conscience of that man, hee will heare you all the weeke after, and say, Me thinkes I see the man still, hee ayimed at me, hee intended me, and mee thinkes, I heare the word still sounding in mine eares; hee is alwayes meditating on the word in this kinde.

A serious meditation of sinne discovered by the word, is a speciall meanes to pierce the soule for the same: when *David* had considered the glory of wicked men, how their eyes flattered out with fatternesse, and they had more than heart could wish, and

Doctrine

Psal. 37.

who

1 Pet. 2. 8.

Two things in the word.

Mat. 14. 24

Lamen. 3.
19. 10.

who but they in the world? they were not troubled, they were not molested; then he thought they were the only men in the world; when he had considered and mused of this, it pierced his soule, and hee was vexed with it, this went to the very intrailles of him, and therefore that place is meruailous pregnant. It was the meanes whereby *Lot* was so touched with the abominations of *Sodome*: that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soule from day to day with their unlawfull deeds. Many saw and heard besides *Lot*, and yet were not vexed, but he vexed himselfe, that is, the meditation of those evils, & bringing them home to his soule, vexed him & troubled him, and the word is a fine word, implying two things, first the search and examination of a thing; Secondly, the racking and vexing a man upon the triall; So it was with *Lot*, he observed all the evils, he weighed them, and pondered them; and then he racked his soule, and vexed himselfe with the consideration of them; the same word that is used here for *vexing*, is used in the matter of a storme, the text saith; *The ship was tossed with the waves*: So meditation doth tesse the soule with vexation. It was the practice of the Church, *Remembring mine affliction, the Wormewood and the Gall, my soule hath them in remembrance, and is humbled in me*: In remembring I remembred, for so the originall hath it, I remembred all my miseries and afflictions, and my sins that were the cause thereof, that is, I still mused and meditated thereof. And what followes? the heart was buckled and bowed thereby, and was broken in the consideration thereof.

But

But you will say, what doe you meane by this musing and meditating?

I answer, meditation is nothing else, but a settled exercise of the minde for the further inquiry of a truth, for the affecting of the heart therewith.

There are foure things to be considered in it; First, it is an exercise of the mind: it doth not barely close with a truth, and apprehend it, and assent unto it, and there rest, but it lookes on every side of the truth. It is a fine phrase of *Dauids*, *I thought upon my wayes, and turned my feet into thy testimonies*. It is taken from curious works, which are the same on both sides; they that worke them, must often turne them on every side: so it was with the Prophet *David*, I turned my wayes upside downe, and looked every way on them. And so againe, *Many shall runne too and fro, and knowledge shall be increased*. Runne too and fro, what is that? It is not the bodily removing of the man, so much as the busie stirring of the minde from one truth to another; it propounds one, and gathers another, so that it sees the whole silvage of the truth. I use to compare meditation to perambulation, when men goe the bounds of the Parish, they goe over every part of it, and see how farre it goes; so meditation is the perambulation of the soule; when the soule lookes how far sinne goeth, and considers the punishment of it, and the plagues that are threatned against it, and the vilenesse of it.

Secondly, it is a settled exercise of the minde, it is not a sudden flash of a mans conceit upon the sudden; But it dwels & staies upon a truth, it settles

againe.

Quest.

Ans.

What meditation is.

I.

PSL. 119.
59.

Dis. 12. 4.

again and againe; that it hath bestowed it selfe upon: When a man is deepe in meditation upon a thing, hee neither seeth nor heareth any other thing, else the Areame of the heart is not settled upon the truth conceived.

A man that hath beene offered an injury by another, when he eates and walkes, still hee thinkes of his injury; his heart is settled on it: So your hearts ought to be on the truth. The *Apostle to Timothy* saith, *Continue in the things thou hast learned*: the word in the originall is, Be in them; that is, let a mans minde be moulded into the truth.

Thirdly, it is a settled exercise for two ends; first, to make a further inquiry of the truth: and secondly, to make the heart affected therewith; for this is the nature of meditation, not to settle it selfe upon a thing knowne; but it would either know more in those truthes that are subjected to it, or else labours to gather something from them: It is with the truth, as it is with a man which goeth into the house, and pulls the latch, when he was without, he might see the out-side of the house; but hee could not see the roomes within, unlesse hee drawes the latch, and comes in, and goe about the house: meditation pulls the latch of the truth, and sees, this is my sinne, this is the cause, here is the misery, this is the plague: and thus meditation searcheth into every corner of the truth.

Lastly, meditation labours to affect the heart, not onely to know a thing, but to bring it home to the soule, *these things are so, know it for thy good*; So when a man hath viewed all, and considered all, then meditation

2 Tim 3.
14.

4.

Iob 5. last.

ditation brings all to the heart, and labours to affect the heart therewith; this is that which brings sorrow and compunction for sinne, a setled exercise of the heart that meditates on sinnes, that makes inquiry after them: and the grounds are two, and very remarkable.

The first is this, meditation makes all a mans sinnes, and any truth belonging thereunto more powerfully and plainly to be brought home unto the heart. It is the action of the understanding when a man doth gather all reasons, and musters up force of argumens, and labours to presse the soule, and lay them heavy upon the heart, and bring it under the power of the truth. It is with meditation as it is with usurers that will grate upon men, and grinde the faces of the poore, and suck the blood of the needy; they will exact upon men, and take use upon use; they will not be contented to take the principall, but they will have consideration for all the time, untill they have sucked the blood of a poore man that is under such a muckworme: A poore man could be content to pay the principall, but to exact use upon use, this kills him: So doth meditation, it exacts and slayeth the soule of a poore sinner; you have committed adultery in a corner, but you shall not so carry it away; This you did against the knowledge of God revealed, against many mercies received, against many judgements threatned, against cheekes of conscience, against many vowes and promises remembered: and Item for this, and Item for that; and thus meditation oppresseth the soule: But

Ground 1.

G

then

then the soule will say , happily it is but a trick of youth, or it is my infirmity : No, no, saith meditation , this hath beene your course from time to time continually , that hath beene your haunt , it hath beene a riveted corruption that hath fastened upon your bones , and will goe to your grave with you, and it will bring you to hell. But then the soule saith , I will repent ; No, no, saith meditation, your heart is hardened in this sinne, you have a heart that cannot repent nor yeeld , the word of God workes not , it prevailes not , the Minister hath flung hell fire in your face, and told you, that no drunkard, nor adulterer shall goe to heaven , and yet you goe away no more moved then the seat whereupon you sat , you have continued in sinne , and are hardened in sinne. Thus marke how meditation exacts use upon use : But then the soule replies , I will goe to the Word, and wait upon the meanes , and it may bee the word will prevaile. No, saith meditation , you have despised the Word, and God will take away his Word from you , or you from his Word , or his blessing from both. What, is it a matter of infirmity ? No, it is your continuall course. And you repent ; No, you cannot, you cannot, you are hardened. And you hope the Word will worke upon you ; No, no, it is cursed unto you. Thus meditation exacts use upon use, untill the blood of the soule be sucked up. Meditation breakes the soule, and layeth waight upon the soule, in this case. It is a passage remarkable of *Peter* , when our Saviour told him , that before the Cock crew twice , hee should

should deny him thrice; the text saith, *When the Cock crew the second time, Peter remembered the words of our Saviour, and went out, and wept bitterly*: the Word in the originall is this, the holy man heaped all the circumstances together, and reasoned thus; the Cock crowes, now I remember the words of Christ: Oh what a wretch am I, that should deny such a Master that called me; such a Master as found me, such a Master as was mercifull unto me? when I never saw my selfe, nor my finnes, he plucked me out from my finnes: It is that Master I have denied, he came to do me good, and to save me, and I have denied him: Nay, even at a dead list, if ever I should have defended him, I should have defended him now; if ever stood for him, I should have stood for him now, but to deny my Master, and forswear him, that I should doe it, an Apostle beloved, an Apostle thus honoured, that I should doe it, when I professed the contrary, what, such a Master denied by mee such an Apostle at such a time, before such persons, and forced to it by such a silly mayden. All these sinfull circumstances, the manner of them, the nature of them, the haynousnesse of them, the holy Apostle laid all these to his heart, and his heart supke under these circumstances thus gathered together, and *hee went out and wept bitterly*. Looke as it is in warre, were there many scores that came against an Army, they might be conquered, or many hundreds might be resisted but if many thousands should come against a small Army, it would be in danger to be overcome. Meditation leadeth as it were an army of arguments,

an army of curses, and miseries, and judgements, against the soule, how ever one misery or plague will not downe, but a man may brooke it, and goe away with it, yet meditation brings an army of arguments, and tells the soule, God is against thee where-ever thou art, and what-ever thou dost. And then the heart begins to cry out as *Elisha's* servant did, *Master what shall I doe?* what, so many sinnes, and so haynous, and so many judgements denounced, and shall fall upon me for them? Lord, how shall I doe? how shall I be delivered from these, and pardoned for these: thus meditation brings home sin more powerfully to the heart.

The second argument is this: as meditation brings in all bills of account; so it fastens sinne upon the consciences of those to whom the word of God is spoken, in so much that the soule cannot make escape from the truth delivered, and from the judgements of God denounced against him: Sometimes when men heare the Word and threatnings denounced, then their hearts are touched, and they goe away resolved, not to commit sinne as they have done: But when they are gone, it works not, but the heart recoyles againe, and goeth to its former course. The reason is, because you meditate not on the Word.

It is with the Word as with a salve, if a man have never so good a salve, which will helpe a sore in foure and twenty houres, if a man shall doe nothing but lay this salve to the wound and take it off, it would never heale the wound, and no wonder: Why? he will not let it lie on; the best salve under heaven

heaven will not heale a sore, and care out a corruption, unlesse it be bound on, and let lie: So it is with the good word of God: many a soule heareth the word of God, and his heart is touched for his sinne, and his conscience begins to be awakened; but when he goeth out of the Church, all is gone, his affections die, and his heart dies, and his conscience is not touched: no wonder, you will not hold the Word to your soules, you heare sinne, and not heare it: you will see sinne, and not apprehend it; and therefore it is, that the Word over-powers not your corruptions: Doe you thinke the salve will worke when you keepe it not on? The Word of God is the salve, conviction of Conscience is like the binding on of the salve, meditation is like the binding of it to the sore; remember the truth which touched thee first, and keepe that on, let nothing take it away from thy minde, hold that good Word close to thy soule; and it will keepe thy heart in the very same temper; after the delivery thereof; as it was in the delivery. The Apostle *James* compares a slight hearer, to a man that looks his face in a glasse slightly, that forgets himselfe what visage he had; but saith, Who so looketh unto the law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetfull hearer, but a doer of the Word, this man shall be blessed in his deedes: the Law of Liberty is the Law of God; And this Law being a glasse; you must not onely heare, and be gone, and slight and neglect it, but you must continue in looking, and then you shall see the complexion of your sinnes, and the vilenesse of your corruption.

Iam. 1. 23.

ons: when the drunkard heareth the basenesse of his sins, and the adulterer the basenesse of his abominations, they looke themselves slightly in the glasse of the Law; But they must carry away the glasse with them, and looke themselves still, and the adulterer must say, I am a prophane creature, and my heart is polluted, conscience defiled, and this soule hardened, and I shall be damned; if a man should thus looke, and view his sinnes, and carry away the glasse with him continually, he would see his life so ugly, and his heart so base, that hee could not be able to beare it; If the pills be never so bitter, yet if a man swallow them suddenly, there is no great distaste; but if a man chaw a pill, it will make a man deadly sick, because it is against the nature of it: so our sinnes are like these pills, they goe downe somewhat pleasantly; because we swallow downe our oathes and prophanenesse, and our malice, and contempt of God and his ordinances; and we make it nothing to mock at the religion of God, and the professors of it: you swallow downe pills now, but God will make you chaw those pills one day, and then they will bee bitter: Though the swearer swallowes downe his oathes now, yet at last the Lord will make him remember, that hee will not hold him guiltlesse, but arraigne him at the day of judgement: and make him cry guilty at the barre, and againe, will make you chaw over your malice: you hated the Lords Word, and the worke of his Spirit: and this will condemne you.

Againe, meditation doth beset the heart of a man, that he cannot escape; wheresoever he is, meditation

dition brings those things to his minde, and the plagues due thereunto; so that hee cannot escape the dint thereof. It is the nature of our own hearts, that we are loath to read our owne destiny, which will be our bane and confusion: meditation calls over the thoughts of a man, tells him the reasons are good, the arguments sound, the Scripture plain, thy finnes evident: Conscience, you know it; therefore heart you must doe it, (saith meditation); take heede of drunkenesse, saith meditation, you heard what the Minister said; these finnes are against God, and the wrath of God is gone out against you for these finnes; these will be your bane, and will bring you to everlasting destruction. And when meditation doth thus yawle at the heart, the minde still musing, & the heart still pondring of sin, at last it is weary, therefore unburdened therewith: the issue of the arguments is this, if meditation brings in sin more powerfull, more plainely to the soule; if it be that, which binds and fasteneth it, and setleth it upon the soule; then the point is cleare, that serious meditation of sin is a speciall meanes to bring a soule to the sight and sorrow for sinne.

The uses are three. If it be so, that meditation is thus powerfull and profitable, both for contrition of the heart, and to bring in consolation to the heart; then what shall we thinke of those men that are unwilling to practise this duty? nay, what shall wee thinke of that untowardnesse of heart which is in us against the command of this duty? It falls mervailous heaue upon us all more or lesse in this kinde: for wee are mervailous guilty in this

Use 1.

kinde; a man had as good to bring a Beare to the stake, as a carnall heart to the consideration of his owne wayes; much more loath is he to ponder seriously, and meditate continually upon his sinnes; no, men are so farre from musing of their sinnes, that they disdain this practise, and scoffe at it: what say they, if all were of your minde, what should become of us? shall we alwayes be poring on our corruptions? so we may hap to runne mad, if we were of your opinion: thus we slight and put it off, and trample on this duty, which is so profitable: the poore will not meditate on his sinnes, he hath no time: the rich they need it not: the wicked dare not: and so no man will in this case. What, shall a man set his soule on a continuall racke? (say they) shall a man drive himselfe to a desperate stand, and trouble himselfe unprofitably? cannot men keepe themselves well when they are well? this is the course and frame of the world, and wee may complaine of this carelesse and heedlesse age, as *Jeremiah* did of his time, *No man repenteth him of his wickednesse, saying, What have I done?* There is no questioning, no searching, no musing: no man saith, these are my sinnes, these are my wayes: no man lookes over his course and conversation, hee doth not apprehend his sinne; and that is the reason we heare of no humbling, of no repenting: but every man runneth into sinne, as the horse rusheth into the battell; hence it is, that there are so many uncleane beasts in the Arke. In the old Law, if there were any beasts that chewed not the cud, hee was counted uncleane: the chewing of the cud is
serious

Ier. 8 6.

serious meditation of the mercies of God to comfort us, and of our sinnes, to humble us : there are many ungodly persons in the bosom of the Church, that muse not of their sinfull wayes, the Prophet *Jeremiah* saith ; *Were they ashamed when they had committed abominations ?* nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush ; he adds a reason in the eleventh verse, *They could not be ashamed :* why ? because they cry, *peace, peace*, let the Minister speake what he can, and denounce what judgement he wil, they promise themselves peace, and quietnesse, they consider not their wayes, and therefore their hearts are not dis tempered therewith, nor troubled at the consideration thereof ; nay, there are many that count it an excellencie, a cunning skill, if they can drive away, and shake off the sight of sinne, if they can put out the meditation of any thing the Word reveales, they make it a mervailous excellent piece of skill, and what they doe themselves, they would have others doe also : but they that now will not see, nor consider, nor meditate of their sinnes, the truth is, they shall see them, as the Lord saith by *Esay* 26.11. *When thy hand is lifted up, they will not see : but they shall see and be ashamed :* So I say, you that will not see your sins, but say, What needs all this stirre ; let the Minister say what hee will, shall we be mad men, to be troubled, and shall we be fooles, to be disquieted with the consideration of our sinnes ? Well, you will not muse upon your sinnes now, but the time will come, that the Lord will set all your sinnes in order before you, and you shall not be able to looke off them.

Ier. 8.12.

And

And hence it is, that when a man hath lived wickedly all his dayes, and comes to lye on his death-bed, then all his sinnes come to his remembrance, and then conscience flies in his face, and sayes, here is a cup for a drunkard, and for an adulterer: now hee seeth nothing but sinne; and hell, and damnation, due to him for his sinne, and then he cries out, he is damned. You might have seene something before then: if you had seene them to be humbled for them, you should never have seene them to be damned for them. If there be but any occasion of basenesse offered to the view of the drunkard, which way doth hee not use to compasse his carnall delights? and shall the drunkard and prophane wretch be so eager in lingering after sin, that hee may commit it, and be damned for it, and shall not a man so labour to see his iniquities, that he may be humbled for them before God, and receive mercy from God in the pardon of the same? Shal the reprobate hale judgements on their soules; and bend all their meditations that way, and shall not they that desire to see God in glory, doe the same?

Use 2.

The second use is for instruction: from the former doctrine delivered, we may collect, that loose, vaine, joviall company, is the greatest hinderance to preparation for Christ, and the greatest obstacle to the worke of grace that can be possible: this is not forced, but followeth clearely from the former truth, in this manner: thus I reason.

That course which takes away the minde from musing, and the understanding from meditating
on

on his evill way, that course is the greatest hinderance why the heart is not humbled, and fitted for the Lord, for meditation brings in contrition, and that prepares the heart for Christ: but your joviall company and ryoting persons, there is nothing under heaven that takes off the minde more from musing, and the understanding from waighing a mans evill throughly, therefore this must needs be a mervailous impediment, and hinderance to those that endeavour to walke uprightly before God in any measure, *Amos 6. 5.* There are rules of their revaldry set downe, they thrust and put away the day of the Lord farre from them: that is the first law they make, the first statute they enact, thinke not of sinne now, and meditate not of judgement now, but come (say they) cast care away, fling away and casheere those melancholly imaginations: wee have many salings, let us not therefore bee pondering of them, and make our selves so much the more miserable, this day shall be as yesterday, and to morrow as to day, no sorrow nor judgement, no sinne now considered. And this is remarkable, and if a poore soule in that drunken distemper should be smitten by the hand of God, and should suggest these words to his drunken companions; Wee are all here merry and jolly, and let out our hearts in delight, but for all this, God will bring us to judgement, the eyes of God seeth our now drinking and bezzeling, and the care of God heareth our blasphemies and swearing; and for these wee shall one day be plagued: why, this should spoyle all the sports & jollity, they could

could not be able to beare him, but they would presently sling him out of doores: this is that which baneth many a soule, therefore take notice of it, if any of you have had a sight of sinne: marke if a drunkard goe aside, and hang the wing a little, mark what men doe, if they can but once get him into their company, and make him shake off those dumps, and runne on in his former course, then this hinders him from meditating on his sinnes, and from being prepared for Christ; and hence it is, that many a poore soule that hath had the fire kindled, the terrour that the Lord hath let into his soule, would have bumbled his proud stomack, and melted his stubborne heart; but partly drunkenesse on the one side, and merriness on another, tooke away all the amazement whereby the soule might have beene wrought upon, and hee have received everlasting salvation: Therefore thinke of it. It was the course the Scripture observed in the lamenting Church, *Zach. 12. 12.* The house of *David* apart, and their wives apart, the house of *Nathan* apart, and their wives apart: There is no casting up of account in a crowd; but if a man will cast up his account, if hee will see his sinnes, and consider his base practises, hee must goe aside by himselfe, loose occasions and vaine occasions withdraw the minde, and plucke off the soule from seeing the evill, and affecting the heart with it. Therefore the Apostle *Peter* a little beyond my text, when he saw the Jewes were affected with that hee had delivered, and that their hearts were touched, when they asked him what they should doe; he saith, *Save your selves*

selves from this untoward generation, God hath now touched your hearts, suffer not Satan by these wicked Instruments of his, to steale the terror of God out of your hearts; for your drunken companions are like nothing else, but those ravening soules spoken of by Christ, that devoured the seede that fell by the way side; the soule is the devill, the seed is the Word of God, now the devill doth not pluck this out of the soule him selfe alone; but often by cursed companions; the Ale-house is the bush, that harbours those ravenous beasts, and drunken companions: By these the devill useth to pluck out this good seede out of the heart; and therefore as you love your soules, suffer not your selves to be drawne away by these cursed wretches, doe not suffer them to steale the worke of Gods Spirit away, which hee hath wrought in your hearts: this I observe to checke that cursed practise of men, who, when a man is troubled, send him to play at cards, or dice, or the like, which is the greatest meanes to hinder the worke of God in their hearts.

Thirdly, seeing meditation brings marvellous comfort and profit to our soules; you are therefore to be exhorted, since you see what it is that God requires, that with speed you set upon it, and that with care and conscience you labour to persevere in the performance thereof; I beseech you thinke of it, what is more usuall in the world then this, that men should make sleight, and little account of their sinnes? nay, to goe boult upright under those execrable abominations, whereof they stand guilty before God. Look as it was with
Sampson,

Ife.

Sampson, he went away with the gates of *Gaza*, and made nothing of them: so there are many, that carrie the gates of hell upon their backs, as drunkenesse and adultery, and yet they feare not, nor are affrighted thereat; nay, Gods owne servants, that desire to looke towards *Zion*, Is not this your complaint many time? I cannot finde sinne heavy, I confesse the word discovers it, and reveales it, but I cannot be troubled for it, I cannot finde my soule burthened with it: sinne is not heavie unto me, but I carrie it away easily, and make no bones of the matter, though proud, and lewd, and carelesse, and untoward, yet my heart is not apprehensive of the weight of it: Let me speake unto you: Are you not therefore here hindered in the way God requires of you, because you weigh not and ponder not those evill wayes you stand guilty of before God, but you are better content to see them and slight them, then to remember them and lay them aside: I beseech you to take notice of it. Looke as it is with men in the world, if five hundred pound weight bee laid in the ground, if a man never plucke at it, hee shall not feele the weight of it; your sinnes are not many hundreds, but many thousand weights, the least vaine thought you ever imagined, the least idle word that ever you uttered, are weight enough to presse your soules downe into everlasting perdition, and therefore so many sinnes, so great, and so constantly committed, against so much knowledge, against so many comforts, and encouragements, against so many vowes and protestations, are much more heavie, and yet you

you seele them not: the reason is, you see them not, you weigh not pride, you weigh not malice, you weigh not dead heartednesse; if you would weigh them seriously, and consider of them thoroughly, you would finde that they were heavier than the sand on the sea shore.

But you will say, how should wee come to meditate on our sinnes aright, that wee may be comforted?

Object.

For the opening of the point, I will discover three things: First, the ground on which our meditation must be raised: Secondly, the manner how to follow it home to the heart. Thirdly, how to put life and power to it, that it may prevaile, and work this blessed end in our soules.

Answer.

First, consider the grounds whereupon meditation must be raised, and them I referre to these foure heads. First, labour to see the mercy, goodnesse, and patience of God; that have beene abused and despised by that unkinde dealing of ours, and that mervailous carelesnesse, those duties God hath required of us; the height of Gods goodnesse to us, layes out the height of all our iniquities committed: The greater the kindnesse and mercy of God is, the greater are our sinnes, that esteeme not of this mercy, but abuse it, and despise it; This adds to our rebellions, this makes our sinnes out of measure sinfull, because God hath beene out of measure mercifull.

Ground 1.

There are many sinnes in one, when a man sinneth against many mercies, and walkes not worthy of them: wee may observe, that this is the course that

that God takes to break the hearts of the Israelites, when they had neglected his wayes, and broken his commandements: what was his message, when the Lord humbled the people, and brake them kindly? The Lord by the Angell thus speakes, I made you to goe out of Ægypt, and brought you to the land which I sware to your fathers, and I said I would never breake my covenant with you, and ye shal make no league with the inhabitants of the land, But ye have not obeyed my voice; why have you done this worke?

Now the Lord presseth this his kindnesse upon them, and labours to melt their hearts in the apprehension of his goodnesse to them, and their unthankfulnesse to him; the text saith, When they heard this, *they lift up their voice, and wept.* They considered Gods kindnesse to them, and their unkindnesse; how hee did all for them, and they did all against him? how the Lord was gracious to them for their comfort, but they did not walke worthy of it. Why have you done this, saith the Lord? Why was my mercy despised? Why was my goodnesse slighted? Why was my patience and long suffering abused? And *when they heard this*, they wept in the consideration of their unnaturall dealing: Nay, this is the thing remarkable in *Moses*, hee stabs the heart, and works effectually upon the Israelites by this meanes. *Doe you thus requite the Lord, O foolish people, and unwise? Is not hee thy Father that hath bought thee? Hath not hee made thee, and established thee? and will you thus reward the Lord? Thus carelessly, and thus proud, and disobedient:*

Deu 32.6.

obedient? Why, *Remember*, saith hee, *the dayes of old*, and then hee reckons upon Gods gracious dealing with them.

I apply this in particular: there is never a soule here present, there is never a man in the basest estate, and lowest condition; but hath had experience of Gods goodnesse, and merveilous loving-kindnesse this way. Were you ever in want, but God supplied you? were you ever in weaknesse, but God strengthened you? In sicknesse, who cured you? in misery, who succoured you? in poverty, who relieved you? Hath not God beene a gracious God unto you? every poore soule can say, never a poore sinner hath had a more gracious God than my soule, all my bones can say, Lord who is like unto thee? this heart hath beene heauey, and thou hast cheared it; this soule hath beene heauey, and thou hast relieved it; many troubles have befallen me, and thou hast given a gracious issue out of them all.

And shall I thus reward the Lord? shall I sinne against his goodnes and his kindnes? Then what shall I say, heare O heaven, and hearken O earth, the Oxe knoweth his owner, and the Ass his masters crib, and *Israel* knoweth not Gods kindnes, nor acknowledgeth his goodnesse towards them, the consideration heereof one would thinke should breake the hardest heart under heaven: if men be but ingenious men, if they have received any great kindnesse from a friend, they were never in want but be relieved them, he tooke them into his house; and they might freely goe to his purse or any thing

he had. If a man should deale thus kindly with another, and this man should deny him an ordinary favour, hee will be ashamed to come into his presence, he will say his house was mine, and his purse was mine, and to deale thus unkindly, nature would have taught mee otherwise: what are our hearts to God that hath beene gracious to us all, hee hath created us, and doth preserve and keepe, and afford many blessings unto us; he gives us our houses that cover us: it is God that affords us all this, and shall we sinne against such mercy? therefore goe to the beasts of the field, and they will tell you, and to the birds of the ayre, and they will discover unto you Gods mercy: goe to your beds and tables; who gives these, and continues these? doth not the Lord? and yet sin against this God? O foolish people and unwise, all love on Gods part, and all negligence on ours? God exceedes in goodnesse towards us, and wee doe exceede in unkindnesse, and unthankfulnesse towards him, this is the first ground upon which meditation must be raised.

Ground 2.

Secondly, if this will not worke upon you, if you have no good nature in you, consider that God is just too, if mercy cannot prevaile with you, you shall have Justice enough, and that without mercy; you must not thinke to slight Gods mercy, and carry it away in that fashion. But God is a just God, as hee is a gracious God; he will be revenged of you; If any stubborne heart shall say, God is mercifull, and therefore we may live as we list, and be as carelesse as wee please: Take heede, that just law that hath beene condemned, and those righteous

our statutes that have beene broken, and God that hath beene provoked by you, will be revenged of you; did ever any provoke the Lord and prosper, and shall you begin? Where is *Nimrod* and *Nebuchadnezer*, and *Pharaoh*, and *Herod*, and those proud persons that set their mouthes against God, and their hearts against heaven; what is now become of them? they are now in the lowermost pit of hell.

God sent *Pharaoh* into the red sea, and for ought wee know, his soule may now be roaring in hell; this is certaine, that whosoever resisteth him, shall finde him a swift Judge to condemne him. The *Apostle* saith, *Our God is a consuming fire. And if my fire be kindled, it shall burne to the bottome of hell.* That Justice of God will not be appeased without satisfaction; that Justice is wise, and cannot be deceived, that Justice is powerfull, and cannot be resisted, and not onely Justice, but mercy and patience wil come in, and plead for vengeance against the sinner, and that will be the sorest plague of all. When you appeare before God, what will you expect? you will call for mercy to save you, and for patience to beare with you: No, so, saith *Mercy*, Justice Lord; I have beene despised. Justice, saith *Patience*, I have beene abused. Justice, saith *Goodnesse*, I have beene wronged. And how will it be then, when mercy it selfe shall condemne that soule, and Patience shall be an accuser of it, and Goodnesse shall call for vengeance against it.

Thirdly, consider the nature of your sinnes, and the haynousnesse of them: sinne is not a trick of

Heb. 12.
Deut. 22.
31.

Ground 3.

youth, or a matter of merriment; but a breach of the Law of God, and therefore it is good for a man in this case to examine every commandement of God, and the breach thereof: You know not your finnes; therefore get you home to the Law, and looke into the glasse thereof, and then bundle up all your finnes thus. So many finnes against God himselfe, in the first commandement; against his worship, in the second; against his name, in the third; against his Sabbath in the fourth commandement; nay, all our thoughts, words, and actions, all of them have beene finnes, able to sinke our soules to the bottome of hell: bundle up your finnes, and lay one upon the heart, and another upon the conscience, and then it will breake your backes; those small infirmities you make nothing of, and those finnes you make slight of, and make a trick of youth, if you will bestow your mindes a little seriously, you will see them to be farre otherwise: every sinne deserves death, *The wages of sinne is death*, not hee onely that murders his neighbour, and takes away his life, but the malicious man, and the proud man deserves death. Nay, to come nearer the text, what if I prove, you had a hand in the shedding of the blood of Christ; dwell here a little and consider it, and you shall see the point cleare. If there bee any soule here present that hopes to have any part in Christ, as if I should goe from man to man and aske, have you a part in Christ? you will say yes, surely I hope so: marke what I say then, if thou hopest for any mercie from Christ, then Christ was thy surety & bare thy

Rom. 6.

thy finnes, and those finnes of thine were the witnesses against our Saviour, they were the Souldiers that tooke him, the thornes that pierced him, the speare that gored him, the Crosse that tooke away his life: The truth is, the Souldiers, and *Pilate*, and the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* could have done nothing to our Saviour but for thy finnes: had it not beene for thy finnes, had it not beene for the finnes of the Elect, the Souldiers could not have apprehended him, the *Pharisees* could not have witnessed against him, there could have beene no Judge to condemne him; very well then, thy finnes caused all this, thy wicked thoughts and wicked actions caused our Saviour to cry out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* He sunke under the consideration of thy finnes, and thou goest away and makest a trick of youth of them, and a matter of merriment, of loose talke, and wicked doing. Therefore when you are going home, thinke with your selves, It was my finnes that had a part in the shedding of the blood of Christ; and when you are at meate, let that come into your minde, I have had a hand in the crucifying of the Lord Jesus Christ; and when you goe to bed thinke of it, I am one of those that have embrewed their hands in the blood of the Lord Jesus, that Saviour that is now at the right hand of God, that hath done so much for his servants, that sweat droppes of blood, those sweates and droppes were for thy finnes, and is this a matter of merriment, and a trick of youth in the meane time? No, no, thy soule will finde it otherwise one day, unlesse the Lord

remove those finnes of thine, those finnes will make thee howle in hell fire one day, unlesse you be burthened with them here: thinke of this, I am one of those that by vaine thoughts and prophane actions, have crucified the Lord of life; and if you can make those sins a matter of merriment I wonder at it.

4.

The fourth Ground ariseth from the consideration of the punishment of sinne, you must consider what sinne will cost you; namely, those endlesse torments that cannot be conceived nor prevented. I will spare to speake of the paines of the wicked here, (I should have said much thereof) and come to speake onely a little of the last judgement. Mee thinks I see the Lord of heaven and earth, and the attributes of God appearing before him: the Mercie of God, the Goodnesse of God, the Wisedome of God, the Power of God, the Patience and long-suffering of God, and they come all to a sinner, a wicked hypocrite, or a carnall professor, and say, Bounty hath kept you, Patience hath borne with you, Long-sufferance hath endured you, Mercy hath relieved you, the Goodnesse of the Lord hath bin great unto you; All these comfortable attributes will bid you adue, and say, Farewell damned soule, you must goe hence to hell, to have fellowship with damned ghosts. Mercy shall never be enlarged towards you any more, you shall never have Patience any more to beare with you, never Goodnesse more to succour you, never compassion more to relieve you, never Power more to strengthen you. Nay, you that have heretofore withdrawne
your

your selves from Gods wisdom and Gospell, you shall never have Wisdom more to guide you, never Gospell more to comfort you, never Mercy more to cheare you, you shall then goe into endlesse and easelesse torments, which can never be ended where you shall never be refreshed, never eased, never comforted; and then you shall remember your sinnes. My covetousnesse and pride was the cause of this, I may thanke my sinnes for this. Thinke of these things (I beseech you,) seriously, and see, if sinne be good now, see, if you can take any sweetnesse in it: I end all with that of *Iob*; *O that my griefe were well weighed, and my calamity laid in the ballance: for now they would be heavier then the sand of the sea.* So say I, oh that our sinnes were weighed, and our iniquities weighed in the ballance together, such mercy have we despised, such Justice have we provoked, such a Lord of life have we crucified, such torments have we deserved, endlesse, easelesse, and remedilesse: if these were weighed, they would be heavier then the sand, and sinke our soules under the consideration of them.

But some may say, I can thinke of these things, and consider seriously of them, and yet for all this my heart no whit is wrought upon thereby, I say therefore, when your meditation is thus raised, you must have this skill to follow home the blow, and make it worke kindly on the heart; and that is done by these three things.

The first is this, when we have conceived aright of sinne, and the nature thereof, and the punishment due thereunto, doe not rest in the bare confi-

deration of these things, but never leave the heart, be still musing of these things, and bring these blessed truthes home to the soule; and binde these things on the will and affections; hold them and fasten them there, force them upon the soule, that the heart may not make an escape: take notice of it, it is a rule I would have you consider of, never leave meditating till you finde your heart so affected with the evill, as your minde and judgement conceived of the evill before; namely, let the heart feele that evill it conceived, let the soule feele that gall to be in sinne, which the minde apprehended to be in it: you see these sinnes loathsome and abominable, make the heart feele them, and be affected with them; the heart will flie off now, and therefore it is the cunning of a Christian to lay at the heart, and pursue it continually, and hold these truthes to the soule, that at last it may be under the dint of the blow, and the power of God make the soule feele and finde, and bee apprehensive of the gall, and bitternesse, and vilenesse of the evill, as before it conceived it so to be; It is not enough for a man to exercise himselfe in the meditation of sinne, but a man must bring his soule in subjection under the power of that meditation, a man must not only chaw his meat, but hee must swallow it also, if hee meane to have it nourish him: meditation is when the heart swalloweth downe these sinnes, that is, when hee labours so to be affected with sinne, and the nature of it, as it doth require. Meditation in this case is like the beleaguring of a Citie, when a Citie is wisely and strongly beleagured, and beset round

round about, they doe two things: first, they batter it from without as much as they can; and secondly, they cut off all provision and reliefe from comming in, and so the Citie being partly battered from without, as much as they can, and being hindered from all reliefe comming in, in conclusion when they see the enemy is strong, and no provision can come to them, they are content to yeeld the Citie, and render up themselves; and if they send a parly to him that doth besiege it, and say, they are ready to perish, why, he bids them deliver then, and they shall be provided for, he bids them yeeld, and they shall be succoured, and before that day, there is no supply shall bee brought into the Citie: So it is with meditation, and here is the cunning of a Christian. Doe as wise Souldiers doe, cut off all provision, that is, by serious meditation bring thy heart to such a loathing of sinne, that it may never love it more, besiege the heart with daily meditation, that so you may cut off any ease and refreshing, that the heart may seeme to have in any sinfull course; if the soule be looking after any sinne, if the soule would goe out a little to occasions, and take delight in his corruptions, the drunkard in his company, and the worldly man in his wealth, then batter that: When you are thus affected, beleaguer the way, that you may finde no comfort, no ease; and when the soule is looking after occasions, and lingring after his abominations, then say to your hearts, You will have your sinners, though you have your shame with them, you will have your corruptions, though you have your confusion with

with them: when the soule would meddle with these, let meditation knocke off these. If you bee still proud, and malicious, and quarrelling, take heed; you cannot have these, but you must have hell and all; you cannot have these, but you must have destruction and all: the mercy of God not be abused; and the justice of God will not be provoked, God will be revenged of you, and at last the heart by this meanes will be troubled: Why, deliver up your sinnes then, and your soules, if your hearts finde any sorrow and anguish; why, then yeeld up your soules unto Christ, that you may finde as much comfort in a good way, as you have done misery in an evill way.

2. Secondly, when you have made the heart thus affected with sinne, take heed it doth not flie off and shake off the yoke. Imagine meditation brings all those sinnes, and miseries, and vilenesse, all are brought home to the heart, and the soule is made sensible by this meanes: Hold the heart there then, labour to keepe the heart in the same temper, that it is brought into, by the consideration of sinne, for this is our nature, when the stroke is troublesome that lieth upon us, and the sinnes are haynous that lie upon us, and are committed by us, these sinnes, these sorrowes, these judgements, when the heart feesles this, it is weary, and would secretly have the wound healed quickly, and the sorrow removed, and the trouble calmed: Take heed of this, and labour to maintaine that heat of heart, which you finde in your selves by vertue of meditation, this is the pitch of the point: as there must be subjection
unto

unto meditation, the heart must be so affected with sinne, as it conceived it to be, so there must be attention; that is, the soule must hold it selfe to that frame and disposition so wrought as it should be. Looke as it is with a Gold-smith that melteth the metall that hee is to make a vessell of, if after the melting thereof, there follow a cooling, it had bin as good it had never beene melted, it is as hard, haply harder, as unfit, haply unfitter than it was before to make a vessell of; but after he hath melted it, hee must keepe it in that frame till hee come to the moulding and fashioning of it: So meditation is like fire, the heart is like a vessell, the heart is made for God, and it may be made a vessell of grace here, and of glory hereafter: Meditation is that which melts the soule, the drosse must be taken away from the soule, and sinne must be loosened from the heart: Now when you have your heart in some measure melted, keepe it there, doe not let it grow loose againe, and carelesse againe; for then you had as good never have beene melted: And that is the reason why many a poore sinner that hath sometimes beene in a good way, and the Lord hath come kindly, and wrought powerfully on the heart, and yet at last it hath growne cold and dumpish, and as hard as ever he was againe, and the work is to begin againe. And take notice of it; looke as it is with the cure of the body, if a man have an old wound, and a deepe one; two things are observeable; it is not enough to launce the wound, and draw out the corruption, but it must be rented also, for if the wound be deepe, it must not be
healed

healed presently, but it must be kept open with a tent, that it may be healed soundly, and thoroughly: so it is here; meditation when it is set on, doth launce the soule, it launceth the heart of a man, and it will goe downe to the bottome of the belly: When a man seeth his sinne, and weigheth his sin, it will goe downe to the bottome sometime, and when your heart is thus affected, doe not heale it too soone, but hold the soule in that blessed frame and disposition: For as meditation doth launce the soule, so attention doth tent the soule; keepe the soule therefore so troublesome and sorrowfull, that you may be healed soundly, thoroughly, and comfortably.

I finde this by experience, a Citie that is beleaguerd and wonne, he that hath wonne it, sets a Garison over it, that hee may keepe it for ever under: So when the soule hath beene wonne by the stroke of meditation, affecting the heart with sin, then set a garison over the soule, and keepe it in awe, set a garison over the Conscience, and keepe all downe, keepe all under, that it may submit it selfe, and that kindly under the stroke of the truth, for it were a blessed frame, if we could alwayes be so in that temper that we are in, when wee are first humbled for our sinnes.

3.

Thirdly, the soule must be so farre kept to the consideration of sinne, that it may seeke out for pardon for sinne. This is a point of mervailous use, and you must give me leave to be enlarged; because there are many deceits this way, in the spirits of a man: for marke it, this is the cunning of the devill,

devill, if it be possible, hee will keepe a man that he shall never see, muse, nor be troubled for sinne; and therefore hee doth plucke him off, and sends him to company on one side, and merriments on the other side, that by this meanes he may keepe him from serious meditation of the evill: But if it be so that God will make a man meditate of his sinnes, and that the heart of a sinner is fully resolved to muse, and ponder, and consider of his corruptions; If hee will pore upon his sinnes, then hee shall see nothing else but sinne: and thus the devill hath hindered many a poore soule from coming unto Christ, and from receiving comfort of him; hee shall now be alwayes poring upon his corruptions, and therefore here lies the skill of a Christian, not to neglect meditation, and therefore here is the stint of meditation of our sinnes; you shall thus discover it: So farre see thy sinnes, so farre be affected with them, so farre hold thy minde to them, that they may make thee see an absolute necessity of a Christ, that they may drive thee to him for succour: here is the maine thing observable, and thus farre wee may goe, and must goe, if ever God intend to doe good to our soules: and therefore when thou settest thy self to muse and meditate upon thy corruptions, & lay them to thy heart; when thou findest thy soule to be affected with them, and humbled under them; labour then to see an absolute necessity of a Lord Jesus Christ, and so farre see them, that they may drive thee, and compell thee to seeke unto Christ for mercy: and this is all God lookes for, all the Lord requires and cares

cares for in this preparative worke: Therefore take notice Of it, see thy sinnes so farre as they may make thee meefely looke for a Christ, and to fall upon the armes of Gods mercy in and through him. For it is not sorrow for sinne, nor humiliation, nor faith it selfe, that can iustifie us in it selfe, but onely as they make way for us to a Christ, and through him we must receive comfort: for these two be the speciall extreames, that the devill seekes to drive a man into. If a man presume of his owne sufficiency, and thinkes he is well enough, hee will not goe to Christ, because hee thinkes hee stands in no need of him; and if he despaire of his owne ability, he will not goe to Christ neither, and here is the ground why a sinner despaire, it is not by reason of any sinne, excepting onely the sinne against the holy Ghost; despaire is not grounded there, for *Cain* despaired; yet *Manasses* committed greater sinnes then *Cain*, and despaired not; but the soule despaire out of stoutnesse of heart, because it hath not sufficiency in it selfe, it will not looke out for helpe and comfort from another: presumption saith, I have sufficiency in my selfe, and neede not goe unto Christ: and despaire saith, I have not sufficiency, and therefore will not goe to Christ: heere is the property of despaire, to cast away hope, when a man hath no hope that God will helpe him; now all the while the soule lookes for sufficiency from Christ, there is hope, for though our sinnes be never so haynous, that's nothing, all the question is, whether wee can hope in Christ: For if all the sinnes that ever were, are,

or

or shall be committed, ranne into one man, as all Rivers runne into one Sea, Christ could as easily pardon his sinnes, as ever hee pardoned the sinnes of any Saints in heaven: but here is the ground, when we looke into our selves, wee can see there is no sufficiencie to comfort us, and wee will not goe to Christ, that we may be comforted, and so wee come to be woide of hope, and to despaire: a despairing heart, is a proud stubborne heart; because he cannot have what he would of his owne, therefore he will not goe to another to receive it, and so sinkes downe in his sinnes. And therefore let this be the period and stint of meditation, when the soule so farre seeth sinne, and the punishment deserved by it, that the heart is resolved that none but Christ can take away these sinnes and the punishments due to them, and is resolved to seeke to Christ, and be beholden to him for all; when it is thus with you, then away to the Lord Jesus Christ, and let this meditation of a mans corruptions be as a Bridge to carry him to Christ, that so he may have salvation, which is promised through him, and shall be bestowed upon all broken hearted sinners: and marke what I say, that soule that will not seeke out to Christ, and will not be beholden to Christ for what he needs, that soule wants brokennesse of heart: and this stubbornnesse of his ariseth from these grounds.

First, the soule will not goe out, because the heart thinks and presumes it hath no need of Christ, and therefore will not goe, but wee will not meddle with that: for that is proper to carnall men.

First,

1.

First, because the heart is not content in good earnest to be ruled by Christ, that he should come and take possession, and doe all in him; therefore if the heart cling to corruption, it will be content that Christ should ease it, but not that Christ should sanctifie it, and remoove that corruption which prevailes over it; when a man is under the sight of sinne, he would faine have God shew mercie unto him, and yet hee will not pray, nor read, nor use the meanes, but dwels upon the meditation of his sinnes, and neglects many ordinances of God, whereby it may receive comfort: this man would have a Christ to quiet him, but not to rule him; and this is the reason why in these cases the soule is never commonly kindly stricken; these would faine have quiet and comfort; and yet they will not be driven to holy duties, nor be content that Christ should governe them; they are content to commit the sinne daily, and would have a pardon presently.

2.

Againe, here is another deceit of the soule of a poore sinner, he would faine joyne something with Christ, for the helping of him in that great worke of salvation, and this I take to be the complaint of sinners, and sometime broken hearted ones too; they dare not goe to expect mercy from the Lord Jesus. Why? why, because they are unworthy, so abominable their lives, so wretched their courses, that they dare not goe to Christ, that hee may shew mercy to them. I reason the point thus; Is it because of your unworthinesse that you dare not goe to Christ? so then, if you had worthinesse, this

this would encourage you for to goe: Why then, you thinke Christ is not able alone to helpe you, but you would have your worthinesse helpe Christ to save you, and so you would joyne with the Lord Jesus in this great price of Salvation and Redemption: If your sinnes were but small, and you had some worthinesse, that so Christ might doe something, and your worthinesse doe something, and so you might make up the price betweene you, then you could be content to goe to Christ, but otherwise you thinke you may not goe to Christ, without some worthinesse of your owne; Againe, why then (belike) you wilt be beholden to Christ for so much mercy, and so much grace, and so much forgivenesse: one of these two must needs be the ground of this complaint, either wee would have our own worthinesse joyne something with Christ, or else we are so vile, that we will not be beholden to Christ for so much mercy; but this unworthinesse indeed is nothing else but pride, a man will not be beholden to Christ for so much mercy, but he will share with Christ in the matter of salvation, or else he will not be partaker of the great worke of redemption.

Imagine a debtor were in prison, and a friend sends to him, what ever the debt be, if he will but come to him, he will pay all; the man returns this answer. If he had not such a great debt to pay, hee would be content to come to him, but the truth is, the debt is so great, that hee will not come to him, nor trouble him: now one of these two must needs follow, either hee thinkes his friend is not able,

or willing to pay his debt, or else in truth hee will not be beholden to him for so much, but if the debt were a little one, then hee would make a shift to pay some, and his friend some, and so they would make up the debt betweene them: So it is in this case, this is that which keeps the heart from laying hold on the promise: they thinke they are unworthy to partake thereof, which is nothing but pride of spirit: for either they would bring something, and share with Christ in the worke of redemption, or else they will not bee beholden to Christ for so much mercy.

Object.

O, saith one, I never had my heart so broken and affected with sinne, as such a one hath; and therefore I dare not goe to Christ.

Ans.

Ay, but is your soule content to goe to Christ, and yeeld to him? would you keepe any corruption? is there any sinne which you would not have Christ come and remove? The soule answereth, I would be content to resigne all to the Lord Jesus Christ, but I am not so humbled as others are: the ground of this complaint is nothing else but selfe-confidence in broken heartednesse, for the soule is not content to have so much broken heartednesse, as is sufficient to bring a man to Christ, but it would have so much as that it might bring a man to Christ to helpe him in the worke of redemption; they thinke it is not enough to have the soule so humbled, as to submit to the Lord Jesus Christ, but they would have so much as they would joyne with Christ in this great worke: which is nothing else, but carnall confidence. Therefore the conclusion is this:

So

So farre see thy sins, so farre meditate upon them, and so farre labour to have thy heart affected with thy sinnes, that three things may follow.

First, that you may see an absolute necessity of Christ, and that thou mayest use all meanes to seeke him, never being quiet till thou findest him; let him be thy ayne in every ordinance thou takest in hand; *pray*, yet rest not in prayer, but in a Saviour that is obtained by it; *heare*, yet rest not in hearing, but convey to thy selfe what is revealed in hearing; receive the *Sacraments*, but rest not in them, but seeke a Saviour which is there signed: this is the very stint and pitch of meditation: thus farre drawe your hearts to the consideration of your sinnes, that the soule may be forced to goe to Christ, and use all meanes to find him; pray for a Christ, heare for a Christ, see a need of Christ, to blesse all thy services, and pardon all thy sinnes, and then you take a right course.

But you will say, our thoughts are dull, and our meditation fraile, and our wants heavie, wee get little ground of our corruptions, but are ever and anone falling into sinne againe; how shall we come to get the life of meditation, that it may be powerfull in us?

There are two speciall helps for this; First, labour to call in the helpe and assistance of *conscience*, that meditation may be more fruitfull and powerfull; *conscience* is a great commander; it is Gods vicegerent and chiefe officer; God is the generall over-seer of all the affaires of the world; but Conscience hath authority to execute Judge-

Object.

Ans.
1.

Rom. 2. 15.

1 Ioh. 3.
20.

ment according to the sentence God hath revealed, and hath a greater command with the heart, then bare meditation hath; *understanding* and *reason* are but the underlings of the *will*, they are but servants and subjects to it, they onely advise the *will* what is good, as a servant may suggest to his Master what is good, and yet his Master may take what hee list, and refuse what hee please in this kinde. But *conscience* hath a greater command, it is said to *accuse* or *excuse* a man, it comes with a law and a command, as the *Apostle* saith, *If our hearts condemne us*; conscience makes the heart to yeeld. Looke as it is happily with a person in debt, if a man have a Writ out for him, hee is not troubled greatly with that, hee will not goe to prison because of that; nay, though hee shew it him, yet hee will not goe, but if hee brings the Sergeant to arrest him, then hee must goe, and then hee must be imprisoned whether hee will or no: So it is heere, meditation brings in the Writ, and sheweth a man his sinnes, layeth open all his duties neglected, so many hundred duties omitted, so many thousand sinnes committed, so many prophanations of Sabbaths, so many oathes, so many blasphemies; but the soule saith, What is this to me? others have sinned as well as I, and I shall doe as well as they; but Conscience is a Sergeant, and Sergeants do your office; these are your sinnes; and as you will answer it at the day of judgement, take heed of those sinnes upon paine of everlasting ruine. When conscience begins thus to arrest a man, then the heart comes and gives way to the truth

truth revealed, and conscience thus settles it upon the heart.

The second meanes whereby meditation may get power upon the soule, is this, wee must cry and call for the spirit of humiliation and contrition, that God by that blessed spirit of his, which in Scripture is called the spirit of bondage, would set to his helping hand, and assist Conscience his officer, and take the matter into his owne hand; and because there are many rebellious corruptions that oppose Gods truth, we must call to heaven for help, that God would seise upon the heart, and breake it: A perverse heart will blind the Judgement, and say, I will have my sins, though I be damned for them, and when Conscience comes, and saith, I will beare witnesse against you for your pride, and covetousnes, and prophanesse; They resist conscience: Looke as it is if a Sergeant arrest a man, he may escape his hands, or kill the Sergeant; but if the Sheriffe or the King himselfe come, and take the prisoner in hand, then hee must goe to prison whether he will or no; so it is here, though a corrupt heart can stop Conscience, stay Conscience, yet there is a commanding power of Gods spirit; the spirit of humiliation: And when God comes from heaven to aide his officer, the heart must stoope, and be governed. Look as it is with a child that is under government, his father perhaps bids the servant correct him, now it is admirable to see how the child will taunt with the servant, and struggle with him mightily, now when the father heareth this, hee saith, Give me the rod, and he tells the child, you would not be

whipped, but I will scourge you, and hee will set it home, and plague him so much the more, because he resisted the servant: so it is here, the Lord hath revealed his will, and sent his Ministers to discover your sinnes, and terrifie your hearts, it is strange to see what resistance we finde; one scornes to heare, and rebells against the Minister. Well, how-ever the voice of the Minister, or the Word, cannot make the blow fall heauie enough for the time, yet if the Lord take the rod into his owne hand, hee will make the stoutest stomach stoope, and the hardest heart come in: when the Father takes the rod into his hand, and lets in hell fire, he will set it home, take it off who will or can; the *Apostle* calls it the spirit of bondage: and observe the place, *When the spirit of bondage commeth, then commeth feare*: The spirit of bondage is said to be the spirit of feare, as who should say, The Lord sheweth a man his bondage by the Almighty power of his Spirit, and will make the soule feeble it, and stoope unto it. In *Iob* the Lord doth shew unto men their workes, and then he commands them to returne, he openeth their eare to discipline (saith the text) and commandeth that they returne from iniquity, he openeth the eye, and maketh a man see his sinnes, and then he commands the heart to returne whether it will or no. When the Lord doth shew unto man his sinnes, and holds him to his sinnes, that hee cannot looke off them, this is the worke of the spirit of bondage: when conscience hath done his duty, and yet his mouth is stopped, then the Lord himselfe comes; and how-ever the Word by the mouth of the Ministry

Rom 8.
15.

Iob 36 6.
10.

nistry could not prevaile, yet God will set the sunlight of his spirit to your soules, and then you shall see your finnes, and stoope under them. When a man would cut off the sense of sinne, yet where-ever hee is, and what-ever hee doth, the Lord presents his finnes to him, when hee goeth in the way, hee reades his finnes in the pathes, when hee is at meate his finnes are before him, when hee goeth to lie downe, he goeth to read his finnes on the teaster of his bed, This is thy covetousnesse, and thy pride, and for these thou shalt be plagued; Looke upon these finnes, they are thine owne, and thou hast deserved punishments to be inflicted upon thee for them: Thus wee see the grounds how meditation must be raised: We see how we may bring meditation home to the heart; we see how also we may get the life and power of meditation.

I thought to have propounded an example, that you may see the practice of the truth delivered: as imagine it were the sinne of the opposing of the Word, I would breake my soule withall; first, by meditation cast the compasse of this sinne, looke into the Word, and see whatsoever the Word hath revealed of this sinne: The text saith, by this meanes the anger of the Lord is mervailously provoked, in so much that *he will laugh at the destruction of such.* Nay, by this meanes Christ himselfe is despised; nay, our condemnation is hereby sealed irrecoverably. 1.Chron.36.16. the text saith, *They despised Gods word, till the wrath of the Lord arose, and there was no remedy:* Nay, hereby we aggravate our condemnation. For Christ saith, *Math.11.22. Woe*

Pro.1.26.

*be to thee Bethsaida: Woe be to thee Chorazin, for if the mighty workes which have beene done in thee, had beene done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented in dust and ashes: But it shall be easier for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgement, than for thee: Nay, the Author to the Hebrewes saith, 2.3. How shall we escape if wee neglect so great salvation? The case of such a man is desperate: how shall we escape? Thus you see the reach how farre this signe goeth, gather up all then, and tell your hearts of this, when they rebell and oppose the word of God; How dare I doe this? what, provoke God so farre as to laugh at my destruction? what, despise Christ and his Spirit; nay, make my case irrecoverable, and aggravate my condemnation? but if the heart will not stoope under this, then call for Conscience; Conscience, to your charge, and then Conscience comes, and chargeth the soule on paine of everlasting condemnation to heare and to bee humbled; And if this will not doe, intreat the Lord to take the rod into his owne hand, and bring these trutthes home unto the soule, that it may never be quieted till it be humbled: this is the course I would have you take, to bring the truth home to your soules. When the Minister hath done his Sermon, then your worke begins, you must heare all the weeke long: he that never meditates of his sinnes, is never like to be broken hearted for his sinnes: take notice of this, The text saith of these converts, *They were pricked in their hearts.**

This clause of the verse discovers unto us, that which brings in this shiverednesse and contrition of spirit,

spirit, which the Lord calls for at the hands of his servants: Now give me leave to make way for my selfe, by opening of the words, that having taken away all the vaile from them, you may more clearly see the truth delivered.

First, let me shew you what this *piercing* or *pricking* of heart is.

Secondly, what is meant by *heart*? You must know, that sound sorrow, or sorrow soundly set on, is here meant by *pricking*, and this word *pricking* resembles sorrow in three degrees: For the word in the originall imports not onely a bare *pricking*, but a *searching quite through*; and we have no word in our English tongue to answer the same word, but onely a shiverednesse of the soule all to pieces. I say there are three things, wherein *pricking* resembles sorrow. First, the body cannot bee pricked, but there must be some paine, some griefe, some trouble wrought by it, and accompanying of it. Secondly, it is the separation of one part from another, as the naturall Philosophers conceive, and as the Physitian gives us to understand, it is the sundering of two parts. Thirdly, the parts being thus pricked, there is the letting of it out, and if any blood or water bee in that part thus pricked; so answerably in this sound sorrow in heart, there are three things. I meane in that sorrow which is set home by the Almighty: First, there is a great griefe and vexation of soule: Secondly, by reason of the burthen that lieth upon the heart, that cursed knot, and union, and combination betwene sinne and the soule, comes in some measure

to bee severed and parted; the soule being thus grieved with the sin, is content to be severed from it: this is the thing wee aime at: Thirdly, this knot of corruption being loosened, and this closure being broken, and the souldring betweene sinne and the soule being removed, there is now a passage for the letting out of all these corruptions, that the heart may be taken from under the power of sinne, and be subject to the power and guidance of God. This is the true nature of sorrow. And by the way, consider this, unlesse the Lord should thus wound and vex the soule, the heart that prizeth corruption as a God (as every naturall man doth) would never be severed from it; did the soule see onely the delight in sinne, it would never part from it; and therefore God is forced to make us feeble this, that we may be severed from our sinnes, and be subject to him in all obedience.

Secondly, what is meant by *heart*; not to tyre you with any matter of signification, this Word implieth two things specially, which concernes our purpose, the first is mainly intended; it is not the naturall part of a man which is in the midst of the body, that is, a fleshly heart; but it is the will it selfe, and that ability of soule, whereby the heart saith, I will have this, and I will not have that. As the understanding is seated in the head, and keepes his sentinell there, so the will is seated in the heart, when it comes to taking or refusing, this is the office of the will, and it discovers his act there; As our Saviour saith, *Where your treasure is, there will your hearts be also*: And (as the Apostle saith) *a man*
confesseth

Mat. 6. 21.

confesseth with his mouth, and beleeueth with his heart: So then they were not onely pricked as with a pin, but this sorrow seiseth upon the soule, and pierceth unto the very will: it was not outward overly sorrow, but that which went to the very root, and entered into the very heart.

By all which, wee may see that finnes unpardoned, are of a piercing nature, they gasp and wound the soule and conscience of transgressours.

And this me thinks should take off the imagination of those that thinke there is no delight, but in sinfull courses, they are much deceived: There is no gall but in sinne, and there is no sorrow but from sinne, and sinne onely imputed made our Saviour to buckle under it. *Dauids* heart was crushed with it. And the Apostle saith, *All the creatures groane under it*, the earth groanes under sinners, and is willing to vomit them up, it is a burden to the Sunne to give light to the adulterer to see his *barlot*, and it is a burden to the ayre to give breathing to a blasphemer, that belcheth out his *oathes* against the God of heaven; nay, it is that which sinkes the damned into the bottomlesse pit, it is such as *Judas* had rather hang himselfe, than endure the horror of Conscience for it: let this therefore dash the foolish conceit of them which think there is no pastime but in sinne; how-ever men glory in sin, & take delight in sucking the pleasure of sin, yet the end will be bitternesse. Their sweet meat will have a sowre sauce, and those finnes which are so sweet, will eat out all comfort from their soules, from everlasting to everlasting. *They were pricked in their hearts.*

Vse.

Psal 22.
Psal 40.
Rom. 8.
19.

So

So that the maine point which fits our aime, is this sound sorrow, piercing of the soule of those that are affected with it, they were not onely pricked in their eyes to weepe for their sinnes, and to say, they would doe so no more: The adulterer is not onely pricked in his eye, that hee should see his adulterous queane, but it goeth further, and sinketh into his very soule, and pierceth through his very heart: It is with sorrow that hath any substance in it, as it was with the repentance of *Ninivis*, not onely the ordinary and refuse sort of people forsooke their sinnes, but even the King himselfe came from his throne, and sate in dust and ashes; yea, the Nobles and other subjects, and the very beasts of the field did fast. So it is comparatively with this sorrow, it is not onely for the tongue to talke of sinnes, and the eye to weepe for his sinnes; but even the Queene of the soule, *she will it selfe*, puts on sack-cloath, and the heart, and all the affections, as so many subjects follow after: It breakes out into the eye, and the frame of the heart shakes with it, and the knees knock together, and the hands grow feeble; it is not, O Lord be mercifull unto us, and sobe gone: But it must goe to your hearts; and you may weepe out your eyes, and cry your sinnes at the market crosse, if you have not put off the will and affection of sinning, as well as the tongue of sinning: the nature of this sorrow is mervailous strange: *David saith, Make me to heare of joy and gladnesse, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoyce*: This sorrow that did teise upon *David*, was not slight, but it breakes all the bones, which

which are the main pillars and props of nature, the burthen was so heaue and so great, that it made all the strength that was in him to shake. And in another Psalme, *My moisture is turned into the drought of Summer*: This sorrow went so deepe into his soule, that it did not onely take away his outward refreshing, but it tooke away all the moist humors, the inward iuice, the very oyle of life. It is admirable which the Prophet *Hosea* saith, *I will meete them as a Beare bereaued of her whelps, and will rend the kalls of their hearts*. You must not thinke to haue a whip and away, but the Lord will breake the very kall of those proud hearts of yours, rather then hee will suffer sinne to dwell in you where his throne should be: And hence it is, that this sorrow sinkes many. Did you neuer see a soule in distresse of Conscience, hee is all turned to dust and ashes; this sorrow goeth to the quick, it is not a little touch and away, but it breaketh the heart inwardly.

Psa. 34. 20.

Hos. 13. 8.

For the opening of this point, let me discover these particulars: First, how the Lord workes this sorrow, and how it is brought into the soule. Secondly, I will shew you the behaviour of the soule when it is thus pierced, and this will shew the soundnesse. Thirdly, I will shew some reason why it must be so. Fourthly, I will answer some questions. Fifthly, make some uses, and therein lay downe some ends how wee may helpe forward this worke when it is begun.

For the first, I know God deales sometimes openly, and sometimes more secretly: But for the first,

first,

first, how this pricking comes into the soule, and how the Lord stabs the soule, and makes at a man to thrust him through. This discovers it selfe in three particulars. First, the Lord commonly and usually lets in a kinde of amazement into the mind of a sinner, and a kind of gastering: As it is with a sudden blow upon the head, if it comes with some violence, it dazells a man, that hee knowes not where he is; Just so it is generally with the soule, the Lord lets in some flashes of his wrath, and darts in some evidences of his truth into the heart of a man, the hammer of Gods Law layeth a sudden blow upon the heart, and this discovers the vile nature of sinne; as when a drunkard is drunke to day, and will be so to morrow; and the Minister preacheth against that sinne; and yet hee will be drunke still; and the blasphemers saith, Come let's sweare the Minister out of the Pulpit; now it may be the Lords lets in some sudden truth, that un-masks the soule, and drives him to a sudden amaze, that now hee sees his corruptions to be otherwise then ever he did; commonly hee doth not yet see the evill of sinne, but hee is driven to a stand and a pause, and hee doth not know what to say of himselfe, nor what to thinke of his sinne; there is a kind of tumult in his thoughts, and a confused cumber, he knowes not what to make of himselfe, and hee goeth away in a kinde of confused distemper: Thus it was with *Paul* when he was running a-long to *Damascus*; and had gotten a lusty Steed to make haste, suddenly there did shine a light from heaven, and he heard a voice from heaven saying unto him, *Saul*,
Saul,

Saul, why persecutest thou me? He marvelled at the matter, and yet hee did not know what the matter was, and therefore he saith, Who art thou Lord? What wouldest thou haue me doe?

As it was with *Saul*, so it is most commonly with us all; it may bee a poore man drops into the Church, and the Lord lets in a light; and the Lord doth compasse him about with some threatnings of the Law, and shewes him the nature of sinne, and the damnation that comes by it, and thereupon his thoughts begin to hurrie in one upon another, and he retires home, and thinks thus with himselfe, Surely the Preacher spake strange things to day, if all be true that he spake, then certainly my condition is naught, surely there is more in sinne then ever I thought of; I did alwayes thinke that such finnes as were grosse, and punishable by the Law of man, were abominable, and God was incensed against them: but what? will every wicked thought sinke the soule into hell unlesse God pardon it? and is God so just, and so severe, and will he punish all sinners? and must I answer for all my petty oathes? If I shall bee condemned for my words, and thoughts, it is a stranger thing; well, I will enquire further of the matter, it is merveilous hard if it be true. Many a man hath bene thus, and goeth no further for the present.

Well then; Secondly, hee resolves to heare the Minister againe, and he falls to reading and conferring with others, to try if it be so as the Minister before revealed unto him, and commonly hee goeth to heare the same Minister againe, and by this meanes

meanes, what with hearing, and reading, and conferring, he seeth the thing he doubted of is too certaine, and that the thing he questioned before, is without all doubt: the Law is just, the Word is plaine, if God be true, this is true, *The wages of sinne is death*; Yea of every sinfull thought: and, *He that beleeueth not is condemned already*: so that now the sinner begins to consider, that the condemnation threatned sleepest not, and that God hath him in chase, and that punishment that God threatens, shall be executed upon him sooner or later: thus the soule from a generall amazement, comes to see that it is so, and by this meanes he is surpris'd with a sudden feare of spirit in expectation and suspicion of what is discovered, lest God should lay it upon him, in so much that the soule saith, What if God should damne me, God may doe it: and what if God should execute his vengeance upon me, the soule feareth that the evill discovered will fall upon him, the nature of his feare is this, hee knoweth there is cause of feare, and he cannot beare the evill when it is come. He saith, I am a sinfull wretch, and God may damne me for ought I know, and what if God should damne me: this is the reason of those phrases of Scripture, *Wee have not received the spirit of bondage to feare againe*: the spirit shewes our bondage, and thence comes this feare.

Hence it is that the Apostle saith, *God hath not given us the spirit of feare*: That is, the spirit of bondage that workes feare; and therefore the Lord saith by Moses, *Thy life shall hang in doubt before thee, and thou shalt feare day and night, thou shalt have no assurance*

Rom. 8.
15.

2 Tim. 1.
17.

assurance of thy life. It is with a foule in this feare, as it was with *Belshazzar* when he commanded the cups to be brought out of the house of the Lord, that he & his Nobles, and concubines might quaffe in them, and brave against the God of Israel: then came a hand writing against him on the wall, and when he saw it, his thoughts troubled him, and his face began to gather palenesse, and his knees knocked one against another, as if he should say, Surely there is some strange evill appointed for me, and with that, his heart began to tremble and shake; Just so it is with this feare, he that runnes ryot in the way of wickednesse, and thinkes to despise Gods Spirit, and to hate the Lord Almighty, and resist the worke of his grace, and faith within himselfe, Let us goe and heare the Minister, that we may cavill at him, and persecute him.

Now it may be there comes this feare and hand-writing against him; and who knowes but that it may be thus with thee, whosoever thou art: for this is a note of the child of the devill, to hate Gods servants and Ministers. Now when a wicked man heares this, he saith, The word of God was professedly spoken against me, these are my sinnes, and these are the Judgements and plagues threatned against them, and therefore why may not I be damned? and why may not I be plagued? and thus his heart is full of feare, and he begins to reason with himselfe; Is this the nature of sinne? and are these the Judgements of God denounced against finfull creatures? why then, what if God should lay these Judgements upon my soule? and who knoweth but

God will doe so to me this day ; he may pluck me out of the land of the living ? I am sure my sinnes are such, and Gods Judgements are such threatned against them, and therefore why may not this be ? and when he goeth to bed he reasoneth thus ; what if I never rise more ? and when he goeth from home, what if I never returne more ? and God may take me with my meat in my mouth, and cast me down into hell fire for ever. The soule being in this estate, and the heart being thus pestered & plagued with the feare of Gods wrath that followeth a man like a Jailor, he is hindred still that he cannot sin so freely, but still the wrath of God pursueth him, and saith, Doe you not feare that God may take you away in the act of sinning, & in the midst of your chambring and wantonnesse ? The heart being thus pestered with this feare, it is not able to endure it, hee labours to drive away this trouble and dread from his minde, and still hee thinkes God is against him, and he heares some behind him saying, Thou must come to Judgement and be plagued : Now the soule labours to drinke away, and play away this Sorrow. Another man haply that was a prodigall before, riseth now early, and will be exceedingly busied about his occasions all the day long, that these things may take up his minde, and the reason is, there lyeth something at the heart, and hee cannot tell which way to drive away his feare, but hee labours all in vaine : For this is to make up walls with untempered mortar, which will presently fall downe ; it is as much as a man should labour to ease himselfe of sinne by sinning, to give
a man

a man colde drinke in a hot burning Feaver.

Thirdly, the Lord pursueth the soule, and when the heart cannot be rid of this feare, the Lord begins to let fly against the soule of a sinner, and discharges that evill upon him which was formerly feared, and affliction enters into the heart. The nature of feare is to feare an evill to come: now the Lord makes the soule to see that it is not onely great drunkards and adulterers that are threatned, but every sinfull thought and idle word.

The soule would faine have driven away this feare, but the Lord will not let him, but saith, These curses shall kindle upon thee, and shall continue for ever to thy perdition. And hence comes this sorrow, the Lord lets in some vein of his vengeance, and some secret displeasure of his, and makes sinne to stab the soule, and then the curse lyeth upon him, and the Lord as it were kindles the fire of his wrath upon him really, and makes him see this is that which hee feared. Now his conscience is all on a flame within him, and hee saith to himselfe, Thou hast sinned and offended a just God, and therefore thou must be damned, and to hell thou must goe: This is the particular seising of the curse upon a sinfull soule; for this is the nature of true sorrow, if evill be to come, we feare it, if evill be upon us, we grieve and sorrow for it; herein is the greatest worke of all, and the Lord deales diversly as hee seeth fit; specially these three wayes.

First, if God have a purpose to civilize a man, he will lay his sorrow as a fetter upon him; he onely meanes to civilize him, and knocke off his fingers

from base courses, as we have knowne some in our dayes; many desperate persecutors of Gods people, God casts this sorrow into their hearts, and then they say, they will persecute Gods people no more, haply they are naught still, but God confines them: first, God onely rips the skinne a little, and layeth some small blow upon him: but if a man have beene rude and a great ryoter, the Lord begins to serve a Writ upon him, and saith, Thou art the man, to thee be it spoken, thy finnes are weighed, and thou art found too light, heaven and salvation is departed from thee, thy sorrow is begun here, never to have end hereafter, but thou must continue in endlesse torments: thou hast continued in sinne, and therefore expect the fierce anger of the Lord to be upon thee for ever; so that now the soule seeth the flashes of hell, and Gods wrath upon the soule, and the terrours of hell lay hold upon the heart, and he confesseth hee is so, and hee hath done so, and therefore he is a poore damned creature; and then the soule labours to welter it, and it may be his conscience will be deluded by some carnall Minister that makes the way broader than it is, and bids him goe and drinke, and play, and worke away his sorrow; or else it may be, hee stops the mouth of conscience with some outward performances: it may be his conscience saith, Thou hast committed these and these finnes, & thou wilt be damned for them; And then he entreats conscience to be quiet & hold his peace, and he wil pray in his family, and heare sermons, & take up some good courses, & thus he takes up a quiet evill course, and flayeth

stayeth here a while, and at last comes to nothing : And thus God leaves him in the lurch, if he meane onely to civilize him.

But secondly, if God intends to doe good to a man, hee will not let him goe thus, and fall to a civill course : When a man begins to colour over his old sinnes, and God hath broken his teeth, that he cannot worry as formerly, but yet there is no power in him; if the Lord love that soule, he will much the more clearely reveale his sinnes unto him: God will pluck away all his chambering and wantonnesse, all his pride and peevishnesse, and pull off his vizard, and shew him all his sinnes, and pursue him, therefore as before, God entred the blow, so now he followes it home. And hence it is that *Iob* saith, *The arrowes of the Almighty sticke fast in me, and the venome thereof drinckes up my spirits, and the terrors of the Almighty encampe themselves against me every way.* And as *David* saith, *Thou keepest my eyes waking, and my sinnes are ever before me.* If God love a sinner, and meane to doe good to him; hee will not let him looke off his sinne; the Lord will ferret him from his denne, and from his base courses and practises : He will be with you in all your stealing and pilfering, and in all your cursed devices, if you belong to him hee will not give you over.

And in another place *Iob* saith, *How long wilt thou not depart from me, nor let me alone till I swallow downe my spittle?* You had better a great deale now have your hearts humbled and broken, and see your sins, than to see them when there is no remedy.

Iob 7.19.

Iob 9. 18.

And in another place the holy man *Iob* saith, *Thou wilt not suffer mee to take in my breath, but fillest me with bitternesse.* Your eyes have beholden vanity, and therefore now you shal see the Lords wrath against you for your sinnes; and you have breathed out your venome against the Lord of heaven, therefore now he will fill your soules with indignation, in so much that ye shall breath in his wrath, as yee have breathed out your oathes against him: you have filled the Lords eyes and eares with your abominations, and the Lord of heaven shall fill you answerably with his wrath.

And in another place *Iob* saith, *Wilt thou breake a dry leafe tossed too and fro?* And yet the Lord brake him: Now the soule seeth all the evill, and the Lord pursueth him, and sets conscience a worke to the full. Consider that of the *Apostle*, *That all those might be damned which beleevd not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousnesse:* Even all of them. What, shall no great ones be saved? No, nor you little ones neither; all that lay not hold upon Christ, but have pleasure in unrighteousnesse, not onely great ones, and such as are abominably prophane, but even all that had pleasure in wickednesse. Now Conscience saith, Doeſt not thou know that thou art one of them that have had pleasure in unrighteousnesse, therefore away thou must goe, and thou shalt be damned: Now the soule shakes, and is driven beyond it selfe, and would utterly faint, but that the Lord upholds it with one hand, as he beates it down with the other; he thinks that every thing is against him, and the fire burnes to consume him, and hee thinkes

thiakes the ayre will poyson him, Conscience flies in his face, and he thinks hell mouth is open to receive him, and the wrath of God hangs over his head, & if God should take away his life, he should tumble head-long downe to hell.

Now the soule is beyond all shift; when it is day, he wisheth it were night, and when it is night, hee wisheth it were day; the wrath of God followeth him wheresoever he goeth, and the soule would faine be rid of this, but hee cannot; and yet all the while the soule is not heavy and sorrowfull for sin; hee is burdened, and could be content to throw away the punishment and horror of sinne, but not the sweet of sinne: as it is with a child that takes a live coale in his hand, thinking to play with it, when hee feeles fire in it, hee throwes it away; hee doth not throw it away, because it is black, but because it burnes him: So it is here: A sinfull wretch will throw away his sinne, because of the wrath of God that is due to him for it, and the drunkard will be drunke no more; but if he might have his queanes and his pots without any punishment or trouble, he would have them with all his heart; hee loves the black and sweet of sinne well enough, but he loves not the plague of sinne.

Foolish people (saith the *Prophet*) *are plagued for their sinnes.* If thou roarest for disquiet of heart, and thy bones are broken; it is because of thy sinne: thy pride, and drunkenesse, and uncleanneffe, brought this upon thee; If thou wilt be eased of the plague, throw away thy corruptions, if you would have the effect removed, then take away the cause.

There are two things in sin which make a man sorrowfull ; first, sinne it selfe that doth defile a man, and separate him from God : Secondly, the punishment of sinne. Now the sinner lookes either so farre at sinne as it causeth punishment, or as it separates from God.

Haply a sinner will come to this, he will be content to carry his heart, and that furiously against sinne, because it brings Judgements and plagues ; But thus farre a hypocrite may goe, a *Judas*, a *Caine*, a *Saul* : *Caine* would say his finnes were greater then could be forgiven : because he had killed his brother ; but hee could never see his sinne so vile, because it did separate him from God.

Now in the third place, if the Lord purpose to doe good to the soule, he will not suffer him to be quiet here, but hee openeth the eye of the soule further ; and makes him sorrow, not because it is a great and shamefull sinne, but the Lord saith to the soule, Even the least sinne makes a separation betweene mee and thee ; and the heart begins to reason thus : Lord, is this true ? is this the smart of sinne ? and is this the vile nature of sinne ? O Lord ! how odious are these abominations that cause this evill, and though they had not caused this evill, yet this is worse then the evill ; that they make a separation betweene God and my soule. Good Lord, why was I borne ? and why came I into this world ? why did God continue mee here, and all the meanes of grace for my good, and all the comforts of this life, whereby my course might be maintained and made lesse tedious ? what if I did

did want this horrore of heart, and had all the ease in the world? and what if I might be free from all misery on earth? what were this, so long as I had sinne in my soule, that makes a separation betweene God and my soule? I was made to be one with God, and to have communion with God, and to obey his commandements, but I have departed from God by sinne, and departed from his commandements.

A godlesse and a gracelesse man is a miserable man though he were never plagued at all; I was made to honour God, and I have done nothing else but dishonoured him: I was made to subject my selfe to the good will of God, but I have withdrawne my selfe from his will; and this is my misery and my plague; If I had beene in hell, and had not had sinne, I had been a happy man, and though I had beene in heaven and had had sin I had beene a miserable man; because it makes a separation betweene me and my God.

Nay, the sinner still thus pleads with himselfe, What is this to mee that I am rich and miserable, honourable and damned, to have quiet, and ease here, and a benumbed conscience, and so in the end to be throwne among the devils for dogges meat? If I had all the ease, wealth, honours, and friends in the world, so long as I have this vile heart I could not be a happy man.

If you were never pierced for your finnes your condition is wofull, you shall have enough of it one day: you that are never troubled for your finnes but goe on smoothly, know this, I charge you in
the

the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, though you had all the ease and pleasures in the world, so long as you have these proud, sturdy, vnfaithfull hearts, you are as miserable creatures as ever breathed upon the face of the earth.

Thus the heart complaines as sometimes the lamenting Church did, *Woe to us that wee have sinned*, not because we have deserved plagues, but because wee have sinned, *Woe to us*; for the God of grace is gone from us, and the God of mercy is gone from us, because wee have sinned; and the God of blessednesse is gone from us, because wee have walked in cursed wayes. Hold hee and then your sorrow goeth right; if the soule can, though I have no horreur of heart, yet if I have this sinfull heart, I am a miserable man.

Sometimes God deales thus punctually with a man; first, hee drives him to an amazement; Secondly, he workes in him mervailous feare of evill that is to come; Thirdly, hee possesseth the soule with the feeling of the evill, and so forth, as in the former particulars, but yet is bound to no time, and therefore we must not limit the holy One of Israel: it is true, the Lord may presse in upon the soule, and worke all this on the sudden, but yet experience hath proved, and reason will confirme it, when God workes never so suddenly, hee affecteth the soule: thus when a poore soule commeth into the congregation, hee layeth some truth upon him, that is new and terrible, so that the soule dare not deny it, nor yet fully resist it, but is in a maze, and by and by it may be the Lord opens his eyes, and awakens

awakens his conscience, and makes that more evident to the soule, and so immediately arrests the soule, and then sorrow falls in a maine upon it; and the heart thinkes God meant his courses, and the Minister spake against him; and he must goe down to hell suddenly; so that sometimes the sinner cries out in the congregation, and though hee containe himselfe for a time, yet hee buckles under the burthen; all this may be done at one Sermon, in one doctrine, or in one part of an use; but usually this is Gods manner of working.

How doth the soule behave it selfe under this sorrow?

Object.

I answer, the heart is most of all weary of the burthen of sinne, as it is sinne, and thinks it the greatest burthen in the world: as a man that hath a great burthen on his backe wrincheth this way and that way, and if he cannot remove it, yet he will ease it; so the heart useth all meanes, and taketh all courses, that if it were possible, it may cast off and ease it selfe of the vilenesse of sinne, and plague of sinne. This wearisomnesse of the soule, which followeth the weight of sinne, makes it selfe knowne in these three particulars.

Answer.
1.

First, his eye is ever upon it, his mouth is ever speaking of it, and hee is alwayes complaining against it, and hee is readily content to take shame to himselfe for it: If a man have a sore place in his body, his eye, and his finger will ever be upon it: so it is with the soule; As the people when they apprehended the hideous wrath of God against them, they entreated *Samuel* to pray for them, for

(say

1 Sam. 13.
19.

(say they) *We have added to all our sinnes this specially, in asking us a King.*

As it is with a man that hath the stone in the reines, or some stich in his side, or where ever his paine or trouble is; there he complaines most; and when the Physitian comes to feele on his body, hee saith, Is it here? No saith hee: Is it here? and when he commeth to the right place, he saith, There it is, cut there, and launce there: So it is with a man that is stung with the vile nature of sinne, when he comes to complain of sinne, hee doth not altogether complain of his horroure, nor of death; but he saith, Oh! that chambring and wantonnesse, that pride, and stubbornnesse, and rebellion of heart: Oh! that rioting, and malice against the Saints of God: The soule seeth this, and complaines of it, and takes shame to himselfe for it; as *Paul* deales with himselfe: which argues a heart truly weary of corruption. I was a persecutor, and a blasphemer, and the like; and I was received to mercy; hee doth not say, I was in horroure, or in trouble, but I was a persecutor: he doth not say, I was thus and thus plagued, but I was an injurious person to Gods Church, there he was weary, and there hee would be eased, if it were possible. Let all vile wretches tremble at it, for God hath enough for all *Pharaohes* and *Nymrods*.

Away therefore with all these Lapwing cries and complaines; it is the nature of that bird to cry and flutter most when she is farthest from her nest, because by this meanes shee would cozen passengers, and save her young ones: So it is with an hypo-

hypocrite, he will complaine a great way off of his sinne, and have some secret turning. It is admirable to see how hard it is for a man to lay open his sinnes before God, it is a signe that hee is never weary of sinne, that hee is not willing truly to confesse his sinne, when he is lawfully called to it, and when he pretends it: it is true sometimes God will accept of a confession made to him in secret, if it be in truth; but when God will have a man unbowell himselfe, and all his abominations, and when a man cometh and desires comfort in this kinde, then for a man to cover his sinne, and to complaine a farre off of some ordinary corruption, which every poore child of God is troubled with, and that particular lust whereof he is guilty, for shame he is not willing to acknowledge; this argueth that the heart is naught, and never found this wearisomnesse of sinne: I know that the best heart under heaven will have many windings and turnings; but the Lord will never leave the heart in this case, till he come to deale plainly; and say, These are my sinnes, and this is my uncleannesse, and this is my secret theft, and thus he openeth himselfe at large, to that man whom God hath appointed for that end: but some are content to confesse and complaine of their sins when God hath them upon the rack, as *Judas* did; but marke, his punishment is the greatest cause of his complaint; and hell is his greatest feare, he is weary of sinne, because of the plague and punishment due to it, but hee never regards the vilenesse of sinne in this respect, because it makes a separation betwene God and his soule.

Secondly,

Hofea 14.
3.

Secondly, as the soule complains of the vile nature of sinne, and desires to have his face covered with shame for it; so in the second place, it will never meddle with, nor give way to any thing that is sinfull, so farre as it is revealed: so to be, setting aside suddaine passions, and violent temptations; but when a man is come to himselfe againe, his conscience is awakened; this is sure, the soule will not dare to tamper with any thing that is sinfull: why? because it hath beene wearied with the burthen of it before. It is the practice of the lamenting Church in *Hofea*; *Assur shall not save us, wee will not ride on horses, neither will wee say to the workes of our hands, Te are our Gods: for with thee the fatherlesse finde mercy.* That is, we will meddle no more with any thing that is sinfull, whereby wee have dishonoured God heretofore, for they had trusted in their horses, and made Idols, and relied upon them, but now they cast them cleane off.

The reason is, because when the soule seeth sinne as it is sinne, and that it is a burthen to the soule, and the heart is now weary of it, it will lay no more weight upon it, because now the heart is weary enough already. The blasphemers feares an oath, and the adulterer shakes to see his queane, and hee trembles to see the place where his abominations have beene committed, and now his heart loathes all these. If a man hath bin once at deathes doore by drinking deadly poyson, hee will never taste of it more; Nay, he will not endure the sight of that cup, hee will rather fare hardly, and rather starve then eate and drinke that which shall kill

kill him, so (saith the soule) it is sinne that hath made a separation betweene me and my God, this pride, or this uncleannesse, had bin the death of me, if God had not been mercifull unto me, and therefore I will rather sinke and die then meddle with these sinnes any more.

And hence it is, that if any thing come under the colour of corruption, the soule that is truly weary of sinne, saith, Omitting of this duty is evill, and therefore I will not omit it, the doing of this action is sinfull, and therefore I will not doe it; because the sinne is worse then the plague, hee will take the lesse evill of the two, as wee use to doe in other matters: if a man hate his sin for the plague, then so soone as that is remoued, he returns to his sinne againe, the blow was but weake. This was the fault in *Judas* his sorrow, hee did see, and confesse his sins, and bewaile them, and did more than many will doe now a dayes, and tooke shame to himselfe; but though he confessed and complained of his sin, yet he would rather commit murder upon himselfe, then under goe the horreur of sin; if he had beene weary of sin because of the loathsomnesse of it, he would not have laid violent hands upon himselfe: These two passages are every where, where true saving grace is.

Now in the third place, if God should deprive a sinner of his judgement, and horreur of conscience, yet if his heart be truly apprehensive of sinne as it is sinne, he cannot lay aside his sorrow; so long as sinne prevayles, and gets head against him, and dogges him up and downe, nothing will content him,

The Soules preparation

him, but the removall of his sinne: That soule which was cured by any other meane save onely by Christ, was never truly wounded for sinne: If ease cures him, then horror was his vexation: If honour cure him, then shame was his burthen: If riches cure him, then poverty did most of all pinch him: but if the soule were truly wounded for sin, then nothing can cure him, but a Saviour to pardon him, and grace to purge him: for what is that to the soule, to have ease and liberty, nay to be in heaven, if he have a naughty rebellious heart, nay if it were possible for him to bee in heaven with his sinfull heart, it would tyre him and burthen him there: Therefore those soules that are cured by any thing saving by Christ, those soules were never truly wounded for sinne as sinne: It may be, horror and vexation lay heavy upon them, but it was not the stroke of sinne that did trouble them.

Then gather up all; Hee that out of the vilenesse which hee seeth in sinne, is content to take shame to himselfe, and will not meddle with his sinne, neither carelessly nor willingly, and is not cured by any thing saving by Christ, this man behaveth himselfe truly in the first place. Thus much of the triall.

Secondly, againe, the soule is restless in importuning the Lord for mercy, and will not be quieted till it get some evidence of Gods favour, the soule will take no nay, it will not be contented unlesse it can find some glimpse of acceptance through the goodnesse of God in Christ. This is plaine, if a man be burthened with a weight, or some heavy load

load that is laid upon him, if that hee be fallen under his burthen, hee lyeth there like to die, and if there be none neere to succour him, all his care is to cry out for helpe, and though hee seeth no man, yet hee cryeth out, O helpe, helpe, for the Lords sake. *Saul* was without sight three dayes, and no doubt he prayed to God all that while, as if he had resolved to give him no rest till he had found mercie: this is the nature of true sorrow, it ever drives a man to God, whereas reprobate sorrow drives a man from God: Nay, it may be, though the heart thinks it shall never finde mercy, yet the Lord carrieth on the soule in an earnest desire, and using the meanes, and will not off from God, and from his word, and sacraments, and ordinances; Nay, though hee sometime concludes, that hee shall never get mercy, nor get power against his corruptions; and then one saith, You had best leave off all; Nay, (saith the soule) I cannot be worse than I am, if I goe to hell I will goe this way. There is a kinde of sorrow in the heart which is heavenly and godly, but reprobate sorrow ever drives a man from God, and makes him say, if I am damned I am damned, if I be a reprobate I am so. O thou wretch, is this all? If a poore creature that is pressed under his burthen crieth for helpe, when almost nature and strength doth faile, hee crieth still for helpe, and that is all hee can say, and so hee dyes, and this is the last word that he speakes with a soft still voice, O helpe, helpe: So it is with the soule of a poore languishing sinner, when the heart is burthened with the vilenesse of the nature of sinne, and the

L

separation

Acts. 17.

separation from God by the same, he doth not now cry ease, and liberty, and riches Lord : No, he cries mercy, mercy Lord on this vile heart of mine, and give me power against these mighty lusts : and after many meanes using when he is going the way of all flesh, his last word is, mercy.

Mee thinkes I see this poore soule sliding away, and saying, How many sinnes have I committed ? Oh mercy, mercy, Christ. And this is the last word he speaketh, and so hee dies; and no question but mercy shall be given him. It is not a *Lord have mercy upon mee*, and *God forgive mee* will serve the turne : No, it is otherwise, if ever God set home this worke, hee will make you restlesse in seeking mercy, and nothing shall content you but mercy to pardon your sinnes, and grace to subdue them, and the soule thinkes if mercy would but shine upon him, and if his sinnes were taken away, that they might never hinder him in a Christian course, hee were a happy man : this is the frame of the soule that is truly weary of sinne.

When the young man came to Christ, and played faire and a farre off, and said he could doe any thing. Well (said Christ) if thou canst doe any thing, then *goe and sell all that thou hast, and give it to the poore: but he went away sorrowfull* from Christ (saith the text) hee did not come to Christ sorrowfull, but went away sorrowfull from Christ, whereas if hee had beene burthened with sinne as sinne, he would have come to Christ sorrowfull, and say, Now I see Lord the world is a heavy burthen; O Lord helpe mee against it, give mee mercy to pardon

don me, and grace to remove it: but our Saviour heard no more of the young man, and as it is in the text, this prieking of heart made the Jewes come to Peter, saying, *Men and brethren, What shall we doe?* They did not as a great many say now a dayes, if the Minister were farre enough off from me, and I from him, I were happy, I cannot bee quiet for him: these are reprobate speeches: but the sinner that is truly humbled and burthened with sinne as sinne, he comes home, and is resolved to wait for mercy, till the Lord sheweth mercy to him. Carnall sorrow sent *Judas* and *Achitophel* to the gallowes, but godly sorrow ever drives a man to God.

When *Jonah* was in the Whales belly, hee said, Lord, though I cannot come to thy temple, I will looke towards it: so a sorrowfull soule that is truly burthened with sinne, will say, though I cannot come to heaven, yet I will looke up to heaven: and though I never finde mercy, yet for mercy will I wait: thy mercy onely Lord shal content me.

But how is it possible my sinnes should wound and pierce my soule in this manner, when as of all things in the world sinne is most pleasing to mee, and nothing so grievous as Gods commandements?

First, the soule must be pierced with sinne, because that is the greatest evill of the soule, which if the heart doe truly apprehend, it cannot but be most of all burthened with it: If a man beare two weights on his backe, that is most grievous which is most heavy; if the one be thirty, and the other

Reason.

I.

forty pound weight, nature will be most burthened and pressed downe with the greatest weight: so there is no evill so properly and directly evill to the soule, as the evill of sinne: Punishment deprives the soule of ease and quiet, but sin deprives the soule of God, and the maine end for which it was created, through which the soule must be happy, or for the want of which it must be accursed. Now sin is as it were ten thousand weight, when as sorrow, and shame, and punishment, they are but a hundred weight: if it were possible for a man to have all the ease and quiet in the world, and to be in heaven, yet if hee had a soule heart and a sinfull soule, he were a miserable cursed creature, and if it were possible to be in hell, free from sinne, he were a happy man. There is nothing that can doe properly good to the soule but God, and nothing can properly doe any hurt to the soule but sin, which estrangeth the heart from God, which is the chiefeft good. If a man had all the pleasures and contents the world could afford, nothing will satisfie the soule but God; and if the soule were in horreur, and had the presence of God with it, it would not but be comforted and quieted therewith. It is possible; nay, God doth it also, hee makes the soule of a man feeble the burthen of sinne because of the vilenesse of it, as well as of the plague and punishment of it. When so ever the Lord will fasten a mans sinne to his conscience, he is able to force the soule to apprehend the evill of sinne, as well as the torment and plague of sinne.

And the ground is this, take the soule as it is polluted

polluted with corruption and all abominations, sin is very crosse to the nature of it, the soule hath its being from God, and was made for him: howsoever the power of sinne prevailed with it, and made it fall short of God, yet the nature of the soule still, considering it as it is a creature, it is made for God, and desires to have fellowship and union with him: therefore marke how I dispute: If sinne be the worst evill to the soule, as crossing the end of it, and depriving the soule of its chiefeest good, then the Lord is able to make the soule see sinne as the greatest evill to the soule; But sin crosseth the end of the creature (for the end of the creature is Godward and to have union and fellowship with the Almighty;) Therefore the Lord is able to make the soule see the evill of sinne as well as the evill of punishment: no wonder then that the heart be most of all pierced with sinne.

The second reason is, because by sound sorrow the soule is truly prepared and fitted for the Lord Jesus Christ, and no other way then this: For when the soule comes to seele sinne in the proper colours of it, and to be affected with the loathsomenesse that is in that sinne, which hath formerly over-ruled it, now the soule begins to renounce the power of that sinne, and to withdraw himselfe from the dominion of his corruptions; so that the union betweene sin and the soule is now broken, and roome is prepared, and way made for the Lord Jesus to come into the soule; when sorrow hath wearied the heart, and loosened it from the love of sinne, then the heart is fitted for Christ. As it is with a

Reason.
2.

vessell that hath beene for dishonour, if a man will turne the nature of it, and make it a vessell of honour, he must not only heat it a little, but hee must melt it throughly, and then it is fit to be a vessell of honour. So the soule of every sinfull man and woman is a vessell of dishonour, and sin hath mervailously polluted them. Now if you will have your hearts fitted for Christ, you must not onely have your hearts warmed a little by *humiliation*, but you must have them melted all to pieces, and the heart must bee content to part with all abominations whatsoever, that so the Lord may take place in it, and rule over it even for ever. First cast out the *strong man*, and then the Lord Christ will come in and *take possession* of the heart; sinne and Satan are the strong man, and the Lord Christ *bindes* this *strong man*, and casts him out, when hee sheweth the vilenesse of sinne, and trieth the heart with the burthen of it, and binds the soule to good behaviour; that now the heart is readily content that Christ should come and doe all in the soule.

Many have gone a great way in the worke of humiliation, and yet because it never went through to the quicke, they have gone backe againe, and become as yile as ever they were; I have known men, that the Lord hath layed a heavie burthen upon them, and awakened their consciences, and driven them to a desperate extremity, and yet after much anguish, and many resolutions, and the prizing of Christ, as they conceived; and after the renouncing of all, to take Christ upon his owne termes, as they imagined; and even these, when they have bin
 cased

cased and refreshed, and God hath taken off the trouble, they have come to be as crosse to God and all goodnesse, and as full of hatred to Gods children as ever, and worse too.

Now why did these fall away? Why were they never Justified and Sanctified? and why did they never come to beleeve in the Lord Jesus? The reason is, because their hearts were never pierced for their sinne, they were never kindly loosened from it; this is the meaning of that place in *Ier. Plow up the fallow grounds of your hearts, and sowe not among thornes*, it is nothing else, but with sound saving sorrow to have the heart pierced with the terrours of the Law seising upon it, and the vilenesse of sin wounding the conscience for it. The heart of a man is compared to fallow ground that is unfruitfull; you must not sow amongst thornes and thistles, first plow it, and lay it bare and naked, and then cast in your seed. If a man plow here a furrow, and there a furrow, and leave here and there a bawke, hee is never like to have a good crop, there will grow so many thistles, and so much grasse, that it will choake the seed: our hearts are this ground, and our corruptions are these thornes and thistles: Now if a man be content to finde some sinne hatefull, because it is shamefull; but will keepe here a lust and there a lust, hee will never make any good husbandry of his heart: though a faithfull Minister should sow all the grace of the promises in his soule, he would never get any good by them, but the corruptions that remaine in the heart will hinder the saving worke thereof.

*Ier. 4. 3.
opened.*

Mat. 13.

Psa. 51. 17.

Psa. 29. 5.

Psal. 90.

Therefore plow up all, and by sound sowing sorrow labour to have thy heart burthened for sinne, and estranged from it, and this is good husbandry indeed; the want of this was the wound of the *thornie ground*, as you may see in the *Parable*, those *hearers* had much of the world in them, much ease, and profit, and pleasure, and these choaked the Word and made it utterly unfruitfull, and so they never received comfort nor mercy afterwards. This is that which the *Prophet David* saith, *A contrite and broken heart O God thou wilt not despise*; If you would have your hearts such as God may take delight in and accept; you must have them broken and contrite: *David* saith, *The Lords voice breaketh the Cedars of Libanus*. So the voice of the Lord like lightning must thunder into the corrupt heart of sinfull creatures.

A contrite heart is that which is powdered all to dust, as the *Prophet* saith, *Thou bringest us to dust, and then thou sayest, Returne againe ye sonnes of men*. So the heart must be broken all in pieces to powder, and the union of sinne must be broken, and it must be content to be weaned from all sinne; As you may make any thing of the hardest flint that is broken all to dust, so it is with the heart that is thus fitted and fashioned; If there be any corruption that the heart lingers after, it will hinder the worke of preparation: If a man cut off all from a branch, save one sliver; that will make it grow still, that it cannot be ingrafted into another stock; So though a mans corrupt heart depart from many sinnes and scandalous abominations: yet if he keepe the

the love of any one sinne, it will be his destruction: as many a man after horrour of heart hath had a love after some base lust or other, and is held by it so fast, that hee can never bee ingrafted into the Lord Jesus. This one lust may breake his neck and send him downe to hell. So then, if the soule onely can be fitted for Christ by sound sorrow, then this must needes pierce the heart before Christ can come there; but the heart cannot bee fitted for Christ without this, and therefore of necessity, the heart must be truly wounded with sorrow for sin.

The last reason is this, because by this meanes the heart comes to set a high price upon Christ and grace, either the grace of God offered in the Gospel, or that good way which God hath commanded us to walke in. If the heart finde the greatest evill to be in horror and vexation, then ease and quietnesse from these will be the greatest good; but now the soule seeth grace to be truly precious; because it seeth sin to be truly vile: and this is the end why the Lord makes the soule see the vilenesse of sin; that the heart may be brought to see the excellencie in Christ, and prize him above all.

Now there are two questions to be answered: First, whether this sound sorrow be a worke of saving grace, and such a worke as cannot be in a reprobate.

Secondly, whether God doth worke this in all men that are truly converted and brought home to Christ, and whether hee workes this in all alike or no.

For the first, whether is this a worke of saving grace

3.

Sorrow
for sinne
makes us
set a high
price up-
on Christ.

Quest. 1

Quest. 2.

Ans.

grace yea or no, and such as cannot be in a reprobate: for answer to this.

First, I will shew the order that this worke hath to the other workes.

Secondly, I wil shew the difference of this from sanctifying sorrow, and yet it comes to be sanctifying sorrow.

For the order: first, the heart in this worke is not yet conceived to be in Christ, but onely to be fitted and prepared for Christ.

Luk. 19.
10.

If you stoppe here in your consideration, and dispute not of any worke to come, it is onely in the way to be ingrafted into Christ; but so, that undoubtredly that soule which hath this worke upon it, shall have faith powred into it: for this is the meaning of that place, *The Lord Iesus came to seeke and save that which was lost*. Now to be *lost* is not because a man is sinfull and miserable in himselfe; but he is *lost* that seeth the evill of sinne, and the punishment that comes thereby, and comes to be lost in his own apprehension, in regard of his own estate; and hee that is thus lost shall be sure to have Christ and salvation by him. It was the end why Christ came, and therefore it shall be fulfilled.

But hee that is truly sensible of his sinne and the vilenesse of it, and abhorres himselfe for it, hee is truly lost, hee is not yet settled on Christ, for then hee were safe enough, but hee is truly sensible of his lost estate, and therefore shall have faith and Christ; though yet hee partake not of them, yet hee shall be everlastingly saved and redeemed by Iesus Christ.

And

And therefore this is an idle question, what if a man die in this worke of preparation before hee come to have faith?

Quest.

I say it is an idle question, because it is impossible that hee which is thus prepared for Christ and grace, but he shall have them before he die: As the Prophet saith, *Behold I will send my messenger before me to prepare my wayes.* When the heart is fitted and prepared, the Lord Christ comes immediatly into it: The temple is the soule, and the way is the preparation for Christ; so as the soule is yet to be conceived as in the way of preparation for Christ; not to have any formall worke of grace whereby hee is able to doe any thing for himselfe.

Ans.

Mal. 3. 1. 2.

The next thing is the difference of the sound saving sorrow from sanctifying sorrow; and you must know there is a double sorrow. First, there is a sorrow in preparation; Secondly, there is a sorrow in sanctification.

The sorrow of the soule in this preparative work of it, is thus to be conceived; when the word of God leaves an impression upon the heart of a man, so that the heart of it selfe is as it were a patient, and onely beares the blow of the Spirit; the Spirit of the Lord, and the over-powring force of the same forceth the soule to beare the Word: and hence come all those phrases of Scripture, as *wounded, pierced, pricked*, and the like, onely in the passive voice; Because the soule is a patient, and the Lord by the Almighty hand of his Spirit, breakes in upon the soule, so that this sorrow in preparation is rather a sorrow wrought upon me, then any worke

*Two-fold
sorrow.*

What preparative sorrow is.

What sorrow in sanctification is.

Rom. 8. 30.

Every saving work is not a sanctifying.

worke coming from any spirituall ability in my selfe. This is sorrow in preparation when I am a patient, and wherein I receive the worke of the Spirit, and am forced and framed by the spirit to doe that which I doe in this kinde.

But then secondly there is a sorrow in sanctification, and that is this, that sorrow that doth flow from a spirituall principle of Grace, and from that power which the heart hath formerly received from Gods Spirit: For sanctification comes after justification, and after the soule hath received faith and grace, then the heart hath a new power given unto it, whereby it is able to set forth it selfe into any holy action, so that in this a man is a free worker; whereas sorrow in preparation is a worke wrought on me, and I am a patient and doe onely endure it: but I have not any spirituall power to doe any thing of my selfe.

Now marke what I say; both these are saving sorrowes, but they differ mervailously; many think that every saving work is a sanctifying work, which is false, for every saving worke is not a sanctifying worke, as the *Apostle* saith, *Those whom hee calleth, them he also justifies, and whom he justifies, he glorifies.* Glorification implies sanctification here in part, and glory for ever hereafter; there is a saving work and calling, but yet not a sanctifying worke; for *vocation* is when God so farre enlighens the mind, as to buckle the heart, and to turne it away from corruption to him, and then afterwards God brings the heart to be justified, and then sanctified; they are first *called*, and then *justified*, and then *glorified*.

The

The difference of these two workes is thus to be conceived in this similitude, as it is with the wheels of a clock, that runnes quite wrong; what must a man doe to set this clock right againe? hee must first stop it that it runne no longer wrong, and then turne it, and set the wheelles right; now all this while the clocke is a patient, and the workman doth all.

Simile.

Secondly, when it is thus set right, then the worman puts the plummetts and weights on it, and now the wheelles can runne of themselves by vertue of that poysse and weight they have gotten; so that these two are plaine different actions.

Just so it is with the frame of the soule, the will and the affections which are as the wheelles of this great and curious clocke (for the soule goes hellward and sin-ward, and the mind knowes nothing, and the will and the affections embrace nothing but hell and sinne) now to bring these into an holy order, the Lord must stop the soule, and that is done by the discovery of sinne, and by this humiliation of heart; when the Lord lets a man see his sinne, and saith to him; If thou wilt have sin thou must have hell and all together; and then the soule saith; If it be so, I will meddle no more with sin, the adulterer will be uncleane no more; and the drunkard will be drunk no more.

Now when the soule is thus turned, it looketh Heaven-ward, and God-ward, and is content Christ should rule over it: All this while the soule is a meere patient, this is a saving worke, and a worke of Gods Spirit where ever it is soundly wrought,

wrought, and will in the end be faith and grace.

But now when the soule is set heaven-ward, and God justifies a poore sinner, and pluckes him to himselfe by faith, and adopts him to be his childe; then the Lord gives him of his Spirit, and this is as the weight of the soule; then by the power of that Spirit the soule is able to runne right, and hath a principle of grace in it, and the poise of the Spirit of grace which doth possesse the soule, makes it able freely to mourne for sinne, and to have the heart enlarged in the service of God: this is mainly the sanctifying worke.

Quest.

The second question is this, whether doth the Lord worke this in all, & whether doth he work it in all alike or no. For I perceive the hearts of many poore Christians are gasping for this, the Lord never wrought upon mee in this manner, and my heart was never thus battered and bruised, therefore how shall we know the same?

Ans.

For the answer of this question, I will handle three things: First, the worke is the same in all: Secondly, the manner is different in the most: Thirdly, many have it in them, and yet perceive it not how or when it was wrought.

First, this work of contrition of heart is wrought in every one in this worke of preparation, before he is, or can be planted into Christ: for the truth of this and the substantiall nature of it, Scripture is plaine, and reason is pregnant; Scriptures are many, I will onely name three, as that in *Luke*, Our Lord Jesus Christ *came to seeke and to save that which was lost*. Wee may observe two things: first, the
qua-

qualification of that party whom Christ will *seek* and *save*, hee must be a *lost* man in his owne apprehension: secondly, see the certainty of salvation of such a one, Christ came for this end; hee came to *seek* up, and *save* that which was *lost*. Now Christ will not *misle* of his end; hee came for the *lost sheepe*, then the *lost sheepe* hee will have; and though the *lost sheepe* cannot *seek* nor *save* themselves, yet Christ will *save* them.

The qualification of those whom Christ will save.

Thus you see, all men must be thus disposed before they can be saved; and if thus fitted and disposed, they shall be certainly saved; It is not enough for a man to be in a miserable estate and damnable condition, but hee must also see it, and his heart must be truly affected with it; and finde and seele the burthen of it; not so much for the punishment, but for the sinne whereby his heart is estranged from God, and also God from his soule.

Now that the sensiblenesse of his lost condition is there spoken of, and this man that hath it shall be saved, may appeare, both in the sensiblenesse of a mans condition in regard of the punishment of sinne is such, as a man may have, and yet never have grace and salvation: Cain had the feeling of Gods wrath, and felt the punishment of it, and so did Judas also, and yet they were never sought up nor saved.

The second place of Scripture, is out of *John*, No man cometh to me except the Father draweth him, by coming you must conceive believing (as in that famous place of *John*, He that comes to mee shall never hunger, and he that believeth in me shall never thirst.)

Now

John 6. 44

John 6. 35

Now this text implyes two things, and they are professedly granted by the intendment of the *Apostle*, for the people murmured why the *Pharisees* and the great ones beleevved not and followed not *Christ*, to whom *Christ* answers; *Vnlesse my Father from heauen draw them they cannot come*: so that these two things are cleare; first, a man must be drawne; secondly, if he be drawne, he shall surely come.

This drawing is thus much: when God opens the eye of a man, and makes knowne his sinne, and sets downe the heart in the acknowledgement of sinne, so that he feesles the vilenesse and the burthen of it, and is content to part with the same.

When the Lord shall lay all a mans abominations upon him, all his adulteries, and all his thefts, and now he sees what it is to depart from a blessed and a pure God; O then, he will be drunk, and uncleane, and malicious no more, because the heart is weary of it, and is content to part with it.

From hence I reason thus, true drawing is ever accompanied with true beleevving; but this sense of sinne in regard of the punishment of it, is not alwayes accompanied with true beleevving, but a man must see his sinne further in the vilenesse of it, and in the abomination of it; and then he shall undoubtedly beleve.

The streame of the whole Scripture runnes this way, and that in *Mathew*; *Come to me all yee that are weary and heavy laden, and I will ease you*: and this is that which *Esay* saith, *The spirit of the Lord is upon me: because he hath anointed me to preach glad tidings to the meeke, hee hath sent mee to binde up the broken hearted,*

Math. 11.
28.

Esay 61.
12.

hearted; to proclaim liberty to the captives; and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable day of the Lord, and to comfort them that mourne: Nay, the garment of gladnesse is fitted onely for the broken hearted, as in the third verse of that chapter, *To appoint unto them that mourne in Sion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, and the oyle of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise, for the spirit of heavinesse*: Nay, the promises of largest extent in Scripture, doe either expressly belong unto such as are broken in heart, or else they doe imply so much, that a man must be so before ever God can or will accept of him.

As in the Revelations, *Hoe, every one that will, let him come freely, and take of the water of the Well of life, and live for ever*: So then, some may say, though a man were not broken hearted, yet if he will take this water of life, he shall live for ever: Nay, but except he be broken hearted and humbled, he will never take it; as a man must have grace, so hee must will the water of life: now to will the water of life is this; to choose grace as the chiefest good, and to prize grace more than any thing else in the world; and to esteeme the Lord Jesus and his grace truly precious.

A man is said to chuse a woman, when hee is content to part with all for her, and to have her for her grace sake; so a man must part with sinne and himselfe, and whatsoever is deare to him, that hee may have grace: now hee will not part with sinne, unlesse hee be weary and burthened with it; and therefore this wearying implies the burthening of

Reve. 22.

17.

Object.

Answ.

the heart with sinne; thus much for the prooofe of Scripture.

Reason.

I.

Now to adde some reasons that may compell our Judgements to yeeld to this truth; And they are taken; First, from the qualification of mans heart naturally; and secondly from what hee must be, before he can receive Christ.

Conclu.

I will discover my thoughts in foure conclusions, and thus I reason. It is a confest case (I conceive) that every man by nature doth entertaine sinne as his God; and seekes and loves that most of all; himselfe, and his sinne, is his God; In this case it is his chiefeft good, and the heart will not, nay, it cannot, be content to part with it; What is the cause that we propound Christ, and grace, and salvation, to a company of poore simple creatures, and yet the counsells, the promises, and commandements of God prevaile not with the heart of them, nor awe them, but still they will have their sinnes, and the offer of Christ and grace lies in the dust; the adulterer will have his queanes, and the drunkard will have his cups, and they will not suffer the word to plucke away their corruptions, but they will have them though they be damned for them; what doth this argue, but that sinne is their God. Nay, it is cleare, not onely in palpable reason, but the Scripture is evident this way: It is the match Christ offers to the young man, if hee would *sell all and follow him, hee should have treasure in heaven*: hee was covetous, and this was a faire offer for a little trash, hee should have everlasting life, now the text saith, *He went away sorrowfull*, hee would

Math. 19.
21. 32.

would rather have his covetousnes and his wealth, than heaven.

The second conclusion is this, there cannot be two Gods in one heart, two Kings in one throne, nor two Sunnes in one firmament; you cannot have Christ, and yet bee an underling to sinne; will Christ be a Physitian to heale you, that you may have your sinnes still? No, our Saviour is plaine to the contrary, *you cannot serve God and Mammon*; If the adulterer will have his queanes, then hee must forsake the Lord, and if hee will not part with his lust, nor have his heart circumcised, nor broken, then he must goe downe whole to hell; as the Prophet said, *Why halt you betwene two opinions, if God be God serve him. God will be chiefe in the soule.*

Cōcln. 2

Mat. 6. 21.

It is not possible to have heaven and hell together; it is impossible for a man to looke up to heaven stedfastly with both his eyes down to the earth, both at one time.

Thirdly, you must of necessity cast off the yoke of corruption; and rebell against that; you must have your first god, pride, and malice, and the like, to be unthroned; before the Lord Christ will set up his Scepter, and before hee can be welcome to your soules; you must have your hearts divorced from your first husbands, from sinne, and all those abominations which you have loved and hugged as your life; if ever you would have Christ make a match with you, and take possession of your soules; as the Lord saith, *Thou shalt be as a widow and sit for mee.*, and as the original hath

Cōcln. 3

Hosea 3. 3.
opened.

it, *Thou shalt be separate from all, and sit thy selfe for mee, and then I will marry thee to my selfe in righteousness.*

Conclu. 4

Lastly, the soule will not part with his corruption and lust, which are his god; unlesse he be wearied with them, and finde the gall and bitterness of their evill nature; I say, till then, it is impossible that ever the soule should bee separate from that sinne wherein it hath found such contentment; therefore it is of necessity that they be parted; but before the soule seeth the venome of sinne, it will not part with it, and so hee cannot come to receive the Lord Jesus Christ; and hence it is, that the Lord in his infinite wisdom is thus not onely willing to doe for a poore sinner, but to force him to it; for there is such love and liking to sinne, that if you pull away the adulterers queanes, and the drunkards pots, you had as good kill them; and they begin to say, It was well with the towne before the Minister came there; the reason is, because he would have his sinne.

Now the Lord is pleased to lay a heavy weight upon the soule, and to force the burthen of sinne upon it, that whereas before, the heart did finde much sweetness in these base courses; the Lord makes them as bitter as gall, or wormewood; And then the soule begins to reason thus with it selfe; and saith, Is it such a thing to be drunke, and is it murdher to envie my brother? and can none such enter into the Kingdome of heaven? and when the soule seeth God taken away, and heaven separated from him, he saith, Is this the pleasing sin that

I have

I have loved? and is this the nature of my pride to have God resist me? this lies heavy upon the heart, and at last the soule is resolved to part with his sin and never to love it more; Good Lord, doe what thou wilt with me, onely take my soule and save me, and take away my lusts and corruptions: The heart is content at length that Christ should doe all; and now the match is made: the sight of sinne from the punishment of it; will never separate the soule from sinne, nor breake that union that is betweene them.

Judas had it in a great measure, and God pluckt his sweet morsels from his mouth, and made him confesse his sinnes, and take shame to himselfe; and so God doth with many, and makes them say, I have beene a drunkard and an adulterer, and a desperate opposer of God and his ordinances: But though *Judas* loathed the horror and punishment of sinne, yet hee had a murtherous disposition still, hee that killed Christ went and *murthered* himselfe too.

Now from these former conclusions I reason thus; If a mans sinnes be his God, and if there cannot be two Gods in one heart, and if those corruptions of the heart must of necessity be cast out, and if the heart will not part with sinne till it be wearied with it, and that is done by godly sorrow; then it is a matter of necessity, that the heart must be pierced; and there must be a separation betweene sinne and the soule, before Christ will marrie the soule, and rule in it; or else there shall be two Gods in one heart, which cannot be.

All are
not alike
wounded
for sinne.

The second thing in this answere is this, some may say, Oh I never found this worke in me. Therefore you must know, how ever this worke is wrought in all for the substance of it, yet in a different manner in the most. For the fashion that God useth in framing the heart is different; two men are *pricked*, the one with a pinne, the other with a speare: two men are cut, the one with a pen-knife, the other with a sword: So the Lord deales kindly and gently with one soule, and roughly with another, and handles it mervailous sharply, and breakes it all to pieces. There is the melting of a thing, and the breaking of it with hammers; this I say the rather to check the imagination that harbours in the heart of some men, otherwise holy and wise, (and yet mistaken in this point) they thinke the Lord never workes grace, but in this extraordinarie manner.

It is true, God sometime must use this affrighting of spirit, and when proud spirits come to grapple with the Lord, hee will make their sturdy hearts to buckle: And it is true; there must be a cleare sight of sinne, and the heart must be wearied with the vilenesse of it, and be content to part with sinne: This is wrought in all: but that it must be in all in this extraordinary fearefull manner as it is in some, the word saith it not, neither is God bound to any manner, there is a difference among persons.

As for example; First, if the person be a scandalous liver, and an opposer of God, and his grace, and sets himselfe against the Lord Jesus Christ, if he

he set his mouth against heaven, and professe himselfe an enemy to God, and to his truth.

Secondly, if a man have harboured a filthy heart, and continued long in sinne, and hath beene a close adulterer, and continued long in it.

Thirdly, if a man have beene confident in a civill course.

Lastly, if God purpose to doe some great works by him.

In all these foure cases he layes a heavy blow upon the heart, and commonly the nature of these persons requires it.

First, when any one hath beene an opposer of God and his grace, if the Lord should deale gently with him, other vile wretches would be ready to say, Such a man is gone to heaven, though hee be thus and thus, yet the Lord dealt lovingly with him: and therefore though I continue in these courses, I shall doe well enough; Nay, (delude not thy selfe, for) the Lord will bruise him, and rend the kall of his heart, and make him seeke to a faithfull Minister for direction, and to a poore Christian for counsell, whom before hee despised; and the world shall know what it is to oppose God, and to persecute his children; as hee broke *Pauls* heart, and made him say, *I am he* that have persecuted the Saints.

Commonly the Lord will not shew mercy to such as these are, in hugger mugger, but will make the world see their humiliation, as they have seene their rebellion and opposition.

Thus the Lord deales with the secret thiefe and

close adulterer; the Lord pluckes away their corruptions, and makes them vomit up their sweet morsels, and then they will say, These are my sins, and this heart of mine is hardened by the continuance in them: And therefore it is that the Lord workes in this manner.

But if the soule be otherwise trained up among godly parents, and live under a soule-saving Ministry, that saith, You cannot goe to heaven by a civill course, and you cannot have any dispensation for your prophanation of the Sabbath; I say, if a man live under such a Ministry, and keepe good company, the Lord may reforme this man, and cut him off from his corruptions kindly, and breake his heart secretly in the apprehension of his sinnes, and yet the world never see it.

Acts 16.

In both these we have an example, in *Lydia* and the *Taylor*; *Lydia* was a sinfull woman, and God opened her eyes, and melted her heart kindly, and brought her to a taste of his goodnesse here, and glory hereafter. But the *Taylor* was an outrageous rebellious wretch, for when the *Apostles* were committed to prison, hee layed them up in stockes and whipped them sore; O, sayes hee, now I have gotten these precise fellows, into my hands, I will have my penny-worths of them.

Now there was much worke to bring this man home; when the *Apostles* were singing *Psalmes*, there came an earth-quake which made the *Prison doores* to fly open, and the prisoners *fetters* fall off, but yet the *Taylor*s heart would not shake; at last the Lord did shake his heart too, and hee came trembling, and

and was ready to lay violent hands upon himselfe, because hee thought the prisoners had beene fled; but the *Apostles* cried to him, *Doesthy selfe no harme: for wee are all here; with that hee fell downe before them, and said, Men and brethren, what shall I doe to be saved?*

Acts 16,
30.

I conclude thus; naturally all men are locked up under infidelity, now the Lord opens their hearts severally, you know some locks are new and fresh, and therefore an easie key may open them, but some lockes are old and rusty, and therefore must be broken open by force of hand; so it is with some mens hearts, howsoever sinne prevailes over the hearts of civill men, and they are full of pride, and the like; yet their hearts are kept cleare from rusting, by restraining grace: now the Lord will draw that man by the key of his spirit, and kindly withdraw him from his sinne. But if a man have beene an old rusty drunkard, or adulterer, no key can open his heart; alas, it is not a little matter will doe the deed, it is not now and then a gracious promise that will breake his heart: But the Lord must come downe from heaven, and breake open the doore by strong hand, by awaking his conscience, that all the COUNTRY rings of him.

You know all mens hearts are compared to stones; some stones are soft, you may crush them to pieces with your hands, and some are flints which must have many blowes before they will breake: so it is with the heart, while it hath not beene melted and softened by humility, the Lord must breake it open by maine force: and as it is with a tree, some branches

Mans hart
is like a
stone,

branches are young and smooth without knots; and some are old ones, and full of knots; now if a man come every day, and give a little cut at the tender branch, at last it will off easily; but it is no cutting of an old tree with a pen-knife, but a man must take an axe, and give many a sore cut, that all the people in the towne may heare it.

All men grow upon the root of sinne, which is *Adams* rebellion: some are young, and have not growne knotty in a rebellious course; every Sabbath day the Lord gives a cut at him by his counsels, and by his threatnings, and by his promises; at last it falls off kindly, and they are content to part with their sinnes, and to rest upon Christ for mercy. Another man is an old sturdy vile wretch, an over-growne adulterer and drunkard, and his heart is blinded in sinne: I tell you, if ever the Lord cut off this man from his base course, he must come with a mighty hand, and with his booke of the Law: God is ever laying at his soule, 'blow after blow, and so at last he begins to forsake his wicked courses; What (saith one) is such a man turned? he was as heavy a persecutor as ever the Sun saw: his father was an enemy to all goodnesse, and hee was as bad; Like father like sonne: Hath the Lord brought him home? Yes, now he sends to the faithfull Ministers, and to Gods people for comfort and direction.

The third and last part of the answer is this, That when God works gently with Christians, they hardly perceive the worke, though wise Christians may approve that which is done; for this is certaine,

taine, whereſoever Chriſt is, there preparation was; if ever man be ſaved, Chriſt hath made him ſee his loſt ſtate.

Sometime the worke is ſecret, and the ſoule apprehends it not becauſe it is ſo, and though he doe, yet it is an unknowne worke to him, hee knowes not what to make of it, hee can finde in his heart to hate thoſe and thoſe ſinfull courſes, yet he cannot ſee how this was wrought in him: Mans ſpirit is ſuch that he miſjudgeth the worke; but give mee a Chriſtian that God doth pleaſe to worke upon in this extraordinary manner, and to breake his heart ſoundly, and to throw him down to ſome purpoſe, though it coſt him deare: this man walkes with more care and conſcience, and hath more comfort comming to himſelfe, and gives more glory to God, whereas the other doth but little good in his place, and hath little comfort comming to him.

Therefore labour for ſoundneſſe in this worke, and then be for ever ſound: but if once deluded here, then for ever cozened, and everlaſtingly damned.

The firſt Uſe is for inſtruction, Is it ſo, that the ſoule of a man is thus pierced to the quicke, and runne thorow by the wrath of the Almighty? Then let this teach the Saints and people of God, how to carry themſelves towards ſuch as God hath thus dealt withall. Are they pierced men? Oh, pittie them: let our ſoules, and the bowells of commiſeration and compaſſion bee let out towards them, and let us never ceaſe to doe good

to

Uſe 1.

How to
carry our
ſelves to-
wards
ſuch as
are wound-
ded for
their ſins.

to them to the very uttermost of our power and strength. And to the performance of this, not onely reason perswades us, but Religion bindes us, and pittie moves us.

Deut. 22.

1, 2, 3.

See what the Lord saith by Moses, *If a man see his neighbours Oxe or Asse fall into distresse by the way, the Lord commanded to ease him and succour him, nay, to lay all businesse aside, and not to hide himselfe from him.*

Thus the Lord commands mercy to the unreasonable creature, that is thus wearied with the weight that hee carrieth; hath the Lord care of Oxen? as the *Apostle* saith in another case, *It is for our sakes that the Lord requires this duty*: The meaning is this; shall not the heart of thy brother be eased, that is tired thus with the wrath of the Almighty? shall not this poore fainting creature be succoured? are you men, or are you beasts in this kinde? If a Hogge bee but in distresse, it is strange to see how folke come about it; are we devils then that we can see poore creatures burthened with the unconceivable wrath of the Lord, and not pittie them? doe you see these, and not mourne and succour, and pray to heaven for them? See what *Job* saith, and let him speake in the behalfe of all distressed foules; *O, saith hee, that my sorrowes were all weighed, they would prove heavier than the sand.* Marke how he cries for succour, Oh you my friends have pittie upon me, for the hand of God is heavy upon me, for the hand of God hath touched me: Imagine you saw him sitting upon the *dunghill mourning*, it is not the hand of a man or an enemy, but the heavie hand of God; and therefore all you my

Job 19.

24, 25.

my friends that see my anguish and my sorrowes, have pittie upon me.

Those pale faces and blubbered cheekes, and feeble hearts, and hands of theirs, say thus much unto you, Have you no regard of a man in misery? have you no pittie saith the *Lamenting Church*? so doth every grieved and humbled soule, their sighes and sorrowes in secret say thus much; Oh all you that walke in the streets, have you no remorse of a poore desolate forlorne creature? Had I beene onely wounded, or had my nature growne weake, some Physitian might have eased me; had I beene poore, some friends might have enriched me; had I beene disgraced, the King might have advanced me to honours, but was there ever sorrow like to my sorrow of soule? It is the God of mercy that shewes himselfe displeased with me, it is the God of all grace and comfort, that hath filled my heart with the venome of his wrath; if there be any pittie or compassion in you, lend helpe, and succour such poore distressed soules; if a woman be in travell, and her strength faileth her; oh what bitter cries shee puts forth, with that all her neighbours come to helpe her, and when they have done all they can, they pray to heaven for that they cannot doe themselves.

And as it is with a man that is swoounding away, they runne for strong cordiall water, and for this man, and that friend, to succour him; and they cry all, Help, help, for the Lords sake, he is cleane gone; this is all well, it is a worke of mercy and pittie.

But men, brethren, and fathers, you know not the

the heart-breaking sorrowes that are in the soules of these poore creatures; hee lies as it were in child bed, and is in the very pangs of conversion, and his heart is even now at a ha, even now to be converted, and loosned from sinne, and to have Christ brought into his soule; O that God would send some amongst you, that you might see some experience of it: Oh saith the poore soule, Will these and these sinnes never be pardoned? and will this proud heart never bee humbled? thus the soule sighes, mournes, and saith, Lord, I see this, and feelee the burthen of it; and yet I have not a heart to be humbled for it, nor to be freed from it; Oh when will it once be? did you but know this, it would make your hearts to bleed to heare him, it is not the swoounding away of a man in a qualme; No, no, the sword of the Almighty hath pierced through his heart, and hee is breathing out his sorrow, as though he were going downe to hell, and he saith, If there be any mercy, any love, any fellowship of the spirit, have mercy upon mee a poore creature, that am under the burthen of the Almighty; O pray and pittie these wounds and vexations of spirit, which no man findes nor feeles, but hee that hath beene thus wounded.

It is the signe of a soule wholly denoted to destruction, that hath a desperate disdain against poore wounded creatures; O saith one, I hope you have hearing enough, have you not; it may be you will tumble down into a Well, or hang your selfe, will you not? Oh fearefull, is it possible there should harbour such a spirit in any man? there is

not

not a greater brand of a man denoted to destruction than this: I do not say onely hee is stark naught for the present, but it is a fearefull brand of a man denoted to eternall destruction; if the devill himselfe were upon earth, I cannot conceive what hee could doe worse.

When the woman was about to bee delivered, the Red Dragon was there ready to destroy the child, and see what the Prophet David saith of such, *Lord powre out thy wrath upon the heathen that know not thee, and the Kingdomes that have not knowne thy name; let thy wrathfull displeasure take hold of them that adde iniquity unto iniquity, and let them not come into thy righteousness, let them bee blotted out of thy booke.* Whats the reason of this? why did David make this imprecation, and say; Lord set open the gates of hell, that thy wrath may fall upon the soules of such as these are; the text saith, *They persecute him whom thou hast smitten*: the Lord smites a poore sinner, and thou art ready to persecute him too; the Lord hath wounded him, and wilt thou stab him to the heart; Good Lord! adde iniquity to iniquity! The sinne is mervailous, and the curse unconceivable.

When Amaleck met Israel, and tooke them at advantage, because they were weake and weary, Remember (saith the text) *what hee did to thee in the way, how hee feared not God*, and the Lord saith, *I remember what Amaleck did to the people of Israel: goe therefore and blot out his name from under heaven, and kill all both young and old.* This is a true type of such as are enemies to the poore Saints of

Reve. 13. 4

Psa. 79. 24,
25, 26.Deut. 25.
17.

of God, that are thus desolate and wounded in their consciences; their being in the wilderness was a type of the Saints conversion; and their coming to Canaan, was a type of the Saints arriving at the heavenly Citie Jerusalem.

Now canst thou jeere at the Saints, that are thus wounded? and canst thou wound them further? and pierce him to the heart, and discourage him? The Lord will remember thee in the day of thy death, and as thou hast shewed no mercy, so shalt thou receive no mercy in that day. I have knowne many such opposers of God and his Grace, that have beene forced to lay violent hands upon themselves, and when the Lord hath gotten some of them upon their sicke bed, they lye roaring there; and the Lord layes his full wrath upon them; If there be any such in this congregation, I pray God let them see some sudden veine of his vengeance, that if it be possible they may finde and feele the waight of this trouble of conscience; that they themselves also may finde mercy from the Lord.

The second part of the Use is this; as wee must pittie those thus wounded; so hereby wee see the best way to send help to such as are wounded in their hearts, the wound is in the heart, therefore let the salve be applyed to the heart. It is in vaine to tell a poore wounded soule of Hawkes or Hounds, or the like: hee is not wounded in his body, but in his heart: the Physick must be applyed to the part diseased. If the head be sick or sore, you must not apply a salve to the arme; and if the brest be ill, you must not apply a salve to the foot: so it is a vaine thing

thing to offer riches, or pleasures, or profits, to a man that is wounded in his conscience for sinne; the wound is not there: if the wound were in disquietnes, then pleasure would cure it; if the wound were in poverty, then riches would cure him; if the wound were in basenesse and contempt; then honours would cure him. No, the heart is wounded, and the conscience is terrified in the apprehension of Gods wrath; And therefore apply the spirituall *Balme of Gilead*, even the blood of Christ: the case is cleare, that all the *Crosses*, and *Crucifixes*, and *Agnus dei* in the world, and all the Popish pardons can doe no good to a wounded Conscience. There is never a Popish shaveling under heaven can cure a wounded soule, hee cannot apply that spirituall salve that should comfort him: hee may delude him, and lead him into the commission of sinne, but he cannot minister any true comfort unto him: thus they cure a poore Christian by searing of his conscience, and make him sinne so much the more, and never be troubled for sinne, as if a man should kill a sicke person, and say now he feels no hurt, so it often fals out, that a man feels no sinne, but yet he is not cured, because his sinne is not removed, and his heart unpacified in the blood of Christ.

Secondly, is it so, that the wound of a sinner is in his heart? then we have here a matter of complaint, that we may justly take up against the secure generation wherein we live, there is but little saving sorrow, and therefore but little saving grace, if there be no preparation for Christ, there can be

Ist 2.

no true evidence of grace, nor of Gods love in Christ; if there be no preparation for a building, there can be no building set up. The Lord be mercifull to a world of men that live in the bosome of the Church, if we had a fountaine of teares with *Jeremy*, to bewaile this age in this respect, it were worth the while, and if the Lord should send some *Ezekiel*, and say to him, Goe to such a Country, or such a Shire, and see if there be any that do mourne for their sinnes, and comfort such: Alas, what would become of a world of persons?

This is a bill of inditement against three sorts of people; it a raignes and condemnes such, as never yet shared in this worke of preparation, and of saving sorrow, and therefore were never in Christ: these swarme in our streetes. And first it falls mervailous heavie upon such as take contentment in their base courses, those loose Epicures and boone Gallants of our time, that goe staggering in our streets, they are so farre from grieving for their sinnes, that it is their greatest vexation that they cannot commit sinne, and have elbow room to sinne freely; O what a griefe it is to them to have a Minister checke them, and that there is a law to punish them for sinne; and whereas a sin shou'd be poyson in their soules to wound them, it becomes as meat to nourish them, *They sleepe not except they have done mischief*, (saith the Wiseman,) *and their sleepe is taken away unlesse they cause some to fall; they eate the bread of wickednesse, and drinke the wine of violence.* So farre it is from being poyson unto them, and so farre are they from being troubled.

Gen. 25.

bled with sinne, that it is their meate and pastime to sinne; Just *Eſau* like: What did he? *When he had eate and dranke, hee roſe up to play*; and this was all he looked after: When he had paſſed away his title to heaven, and happineſſe, and eſteemed of *Chriſt* and heaven no more than of a meſſe of portage, he ate and dranke; his heart was never touched for what he had done, he did not ſmite upon his thigh, as *Ephraim* did, and ſay, *What have I done? Have I ſold away my birth-right for nothing? You that know the world, you know there are many that ſit upon the Ale-bench, and ſweare, and drink, and raile againſt Gods ſervants, and are never troubled for it; Nay, the world is come to this paſſe, that it is their greateſt vexation, that they are hindered in their ſinfull courſes.*

It was the guiſe of the old world: *Haman* went home ſicke, becauſe hee wanted the *Cap* and *knee* from *Mordecai*: *Amnon* was ſicke of inceſt, and *Ahab* was ſicke of covetouſneſſe, and *Ahiſophel* was ſicke becauſe his counſell was not followed; The Lord of heaven knowes, the adulterer is ſicke becauſe hee cannot get the heart and company of his queane; many a man is ſicke of envie, it is rottenneſſe to his bones; yea, many a man goeth up and downe ſick of it, and is not quiet, becauſe he cannot vent his rage againſt a faithfull Miniſter that checks him: You ſwearers, doe not your hearts riſe againſt the King and ſtate, for making a law againſt that ſinne: Doe you not hate the Conſtable and witnes that come in againſt you, you account theſe the greateſt plague to you in all the world; I ap-

peale to the hearts of you all, that heare mee this day; can you say you are troubled for sinne, and yet grieve, because you cannot commit sinne still: Woe, woe to your soules that thus delight in sin. There are many that despight the spirit of grace, and sticke not to say; I did sweare such a man out of the house, and I did drinke such a man under the table dead: Read that place of the *Apostle*, and there you shall see your doome, and if there be any such in your families, or amongst your neighbours, throw this in their faces, and if they will goe downe to hell, let them goe with paine, *that all they might be damned* (saith the text) *which beleeeved not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousnesse.* God is not partiall, but saith, *That all they might be damned*: it would almost shake a mans heart to thinke of it.

2 Thes. 2.
13.

How many notorious vile wretches may say, Good Lord, what will become of our families, and villages? we are all opposers of God and his grace, shall *all be damned*? I dare not say what God will doe to thee, the text saith so; This, mee thinkes, might lie as poyson and Rats-bane upon the heart of a sinfull creature: The Lord in mercy looke upon you, and make sinne as loathsome and bitter unto you, as ever it hath beene sweet and pleasant. You see how the matter will goe with you: you that thus jyre and jeast at the Saints, and sport your selves in sin, the time may come that it will be a dry feast, as it was with *Dives* that was drunke, and *fa-red deliciously every day*, hee had a dry feast in hell, and could not have a drop of water to coole his tongue.

Luk. 16. 25

So

So it will be with you, you must either buckle and mourne for sin, or else burne for ever.

Secondly, it condemnes such as are in a faire straine; such are they that have a slight sense of sinne, but it never goes downe to the heart, the skinne is ripped a little, but the kall of their heart was never broken for their abominations. *Naaman* was to wash seven times in *Jordan*, so this water of godly sorrow is of a healing nature, but these men doe not rub and rinse their soules in it, they onely dip their soules in a little sorrow; but you must wash it thoroughly and fully, if ever you desire to have the leprosie of sinne purged out: Men bathe their sinnes with teares, but they doe not drowne them; they doe as parents doe with their children, they will correct them a little, and presently cocker them againe; so the hypocrite useth to trouble his corruptions, and complaine of them, and vexe them a little with sorrow; but in the meane time cocker them and dandle them againe. But sinne will not be so killed, and the heart will not be so easily broken, this kinde of sorrow is too slight and overly.

As it is with a debter, that hath borrowed money, he will complaine he had an ill bargaine, and desires that either he might have the debt abated, or the day put off, hee puts it off with meeere talking; such a generation there are of whining hypocrites, that will outwardly complaine of their corruptions, but keepe their corruptions still; As *Ahab* did, he hated *Micah*, and afterwards he fasted and prayed, that hee might sinne more freely

1 Reg. 21.

without suspicion : So there is many a cursed hypocrite that lives in a faire course , and yet will cheat and lie, and deale mervailous unjustly ; and then hee will complaine of his sinne, and confesse, onely to bathe his sinnes ; but drowne his sinnes, and subdue them he will nor, and this he doth that he may sin more freely againe ; it is but fasting and praying, &c.

O brethren, it is a desperate hypocrisie, that, sorrow which God hath appointed as a meanes to purge our sinne , should be a meanes to cover our sinne : will a few wambling teares doe the deede, and breake the heart ? is this acceptable sorrow ? you your selves are ashamed of this worke, and do you thinke God will accept of it ? No, no, it is not the rending of the garments , nor the weeping of the eyes, that will doe the deede ; but you must breake your hearts : If you onely cut off the legges or wings of a fowle, it will live for all that : so, you cut off the armes or hands of sinne ; but so long as the heart is not wounded , and drivento any amazement for sinne, it will live with you here and in hell too.

Oh doe not cozen your owne soules ; it is not the teares of the eye , but the blood of the heart that your sinnes must cost , and if you come not to this, never thinke that your sorrow is good ; and therefore you that finde your selves guilty , lay your hands upon your hearts, and say, Good Lord, this is my portion, the Lord knowes I have confessed my sinnes, and yet have taken liberty to sinne : but my heart was never burthened with this evill
and

and vilenesse of sinne; and therefore to this day I never had this true sorrow.

There is a third sort of sorrowe which is the worst of all, they are such as heretofore have drunk deepe of this sorrow, and have beene extraordinarily stricken, and yet they are growne so much the more hardened in their sinnes by all these blowes that God hath layed upon them; these are in a desperate condition, even such as God hath made howle in the congregation, yet afterwards fall into the same courses againe, and returne to their old byas, and now they can outface God and his Ministers and all; and thinke it a matter of baseness to be disquieted in heart, as they have beene: such novices and children they were once, that they could not sleepe nor bee quieted, but now they care not what all the Ministers under heaven say against them; nay, they can feare in our faces, and be drunke and vile, and be never troubled for it, they have gotten the skill of it: This is the most fearefull condition that almost a poore creature can fall into.

Thou accountest it thy glory and credit that thou canst beare all, and art metall of prooffe, and no bullets can pierce thee, thou wast troubled before, but now thou hast shaken it off; This I say is thy shame, and will aggravate thy condemnation; nay, I take it to be one of the sorest tokens under heaven, of a gracelesse heart; If thou hast had thy conscience awakened, and hast beene troubled for sinne, and now dost fly off, It is a signe of Gods high displeasure towards thee; thou takest

Eſay 6.7,
8,9.

the right courſe, as if God had invented a way to deſtroy thy ſoule, as you may ſee in *Eſay*; *Goe thy wayes*, ſaith the Lord, *ſpeake to this people, but they ſhall not heare; make the heart of this people fat*: as though he had ſaid, there are a company of people in ſuch a place; *Goe thy wayes to them, open their eyes, and touch their hearts, and awaken their conſciences*, and when thou haſt done, then let their conſciences be ſcared and ſatted, then they wil goe the right way to deſtruction; for if they would awaken, and ſorrow kindly, and repent, I muſt needs ſave them.

Let theſe men remember that it is a heavy ſigne God hath forſaken them; mee thinkes this ſhould trouble their ſoules exceedingly, and force them to cry out, I am the man that have my heart ſatted, and would not be touched and converted.

Now if all be true that I have ſaid, there are but few ſorrowers for ſinne, therefore few ſaved; here wee ſee the ground and reaſon, why many fly off from Godlineſſe, and Chriſtianity: This is the cauſe; their ſoules were onely troubled with a little helliſh ſorrow, but their hearts were never kindly grieved for their ſinnes. If a mans arme be broken and diſjoynted a little, it may grow together againe; But if it be quite broken off, it cannot grow together; ſo the terrour of the Law affrighted his conſcience, and a powerfull Miniſter unjoynted his ſoule, and the Judgements of God were rending of him; but he was never cut off altogether: and therefore he returnes as vile, & as baſe, if not worſe then before, & he growes more firmly to his corruptions.

It

It is with a mans conversion, as in some mens ditching; they doe not pull up all the trees by the roots, but plash them: so when you come to have your corruptions cut off, you plash them, and doe not wound your hearts kindly, and you doe not make your soules feeble the burthen of sinne truly: this will make a man grow and flourish still, howsoever more cunningly and subtilly. This lopping professour growes more subtil in his wickednesse: the soule that hath beene terrified for his lusts, he is now grown a plashed adulterer, an Alehouse haunter, he will be drunke more cunningly and secretly, and so he that hath beene an open opposer of Gods children, will now jyre and jeast at them in a corner, and when he comes amongst his old companions, then he can vent out all his malice.

This is the reason why all wicked men that were in some good way of preparation of soule, they turne their backes upon Christ; even because they were never cut off kindly from their sinnes; but only unjoynted, and that is the reason why they fall to their old corruptions againe. This is the maine cause of all the hypocrisie under heaven: there was never any soule that made profession, & falls again, but the ground of it is here.

The third Use is for exhortation: If every sorrow will not do it, and if slight sorrow will not do it, what then remaines to bee done? then if ever thou wouldest be comforted, and receive mercy from the great God, labour to take the right way, and never be quieted, till you doe bring your hearts to a right pitch of sorrow; les it never be said of you

Vse 3.

Hofea 7.
14.

Math. 5.

Amos 6.1.

Pfal. 51.

you as it was of them in *Hofea*, *They have not cried unto me with their hearts when they howled upon their beds, they assembled themselves for corne and wine, but they rebell against me.* Thou hast a little slight sorrow, but oh, labour to have thy heart truly touched, that at last it may breake in regard of thy many distempers; the longer seed time, the greater harvest; and so howsoever this sorrow is troublesome now, it will be very comfortable in the end; and though it be tedious to lay all these cursed abominations upon thy heart; yet it will not be harsh when the Lord remembers you in his Kingdome; it will never repent you that you have had your hearts humbled and broken, when the Lord comes to heale you; and it will never repent you that you have wept, when the Lord comes to wipe away all teares from your eyes. *Blessed are they that mourne, for they shall be comforted,* saith our Saviour; but *Woe to you that are at ease in Sion;* there is a time of mourning for sinne; you cannot have ease and quietnesse alwayes, you had better now be wounded than everlastingly tormented. And therefore if you desire to see the face of God with comfort, and to have Christ speake for you, and say, *Come you poore heavie hearted sinners, I will ease you;* if ever you desire this, labour to lay load on your hearts with sorrow for your sinnes. Oh what comfort shall a poore broken heart finde in that day! *David saith, A broken and contrite heart (O Lord) thou wilt not despise.*

When men goe into a farre Countrey for merchandize, they will not take rattles and such toys for

for their money; but such commodities as they may get something by: so when the Lord comes for broken hearts; you must not thinke to put the Lord off with a little painted sorrow: No, no, it is a broken heart that the Lord will not despise. Would you know what kinde of heart the Lord will accept and never cast off? *It is a broken heart*: tell your friends and neighbours of it, mee thinke you looke as if you would finde acceptance with God, and goe to heaven; Oh then get an humble, lowly, broken heart; the Lord regards not all the rivers of soyle in the world; not an hundred thousand fasts; but it is a broken heart that God will blesse and glorifie.

Looke as it is with a womans conception, those birthes that are hasty, the children are either still borne, or the woman most commonly dies; so doe not thou thinke to fall upon the promise presently. Indeed you cannot fall upon it too soone upon good grounds; but it is impossible, that ever a full soule or a haughty heart should beleeeve, thou mayest be deceived, but thou canst not be ingrafted into Christ: therefore when God begins to worke, never rest till you come to a full measure of this brokennesse of heart. Oh follow the blow, and labour to make this worke sound and good unto the bottome, and then you shall be sure to receive comfort, as the Prophet David saith, *Our eyes are up unto thee till thou have mercy on us*. Let your consciences bee wounded thoroughly and kindly, and resolve not to heare the cursed counsell of carnall friends, that say, What neede you mourne;

O poore

Psal. 123.
3.

O poore fooles, there is not any, even the civillest professor in the Kingdome; but if God discharge his siones to his heart as hee could doe, it were enough to make him goe howling with sorrow to his grave; therefore humble your selves before God, and never be at rest, till the Lord shew mercie to your soules, never unburthen your soules before God ease you; and doe not breake prison. For if you doe, God will send after you with a witnesse. No, no, When God hath put thee into prison, breake not out till God send to deliver you; and then your hearts will be filled with comfort: soundly humbled, soundly comforted: If a man be lost, Christ will seeke him up and save him.

Quest.

Now it may be some poore soule will say, How shall I bring my heart to this sound worke of sorrowing for sinne?

Ans.

I.

I answere, when the Lord begins to worke upon you, and you begin to see your corruptions, then possesse your soules with the apprehension of the ticklishnesse of your condition wherein you are: this worke is great and mervailous inward, and you may easily be deceived, and the danger is great if you be deceived: it is in this case with the soule, as it is with a ship on the sea, when the Mariners passe by and see the rockes where such and such ships have beene split, and the men and all lost; they are very wary to steere aright, and to direct their compasse aright; but neere sands and rockes they will not come: So it is with this humbling of the heart, many have beene cozened and deceived therein: therefore now hold this rule,

Let

Let that soule whose eyes God hath opened, and brought under his blowes (let such I say) rather feare he is not found in the worke, than feare that he shall not have ease; for every man saith, I pray you Sir comfort and refresh me; and will God never give me comfort? But herein they goe wrong; many perish because they goe off from this worke so soone; never did any perish because he received the work soundly. Therefore reason thus with thy owne heart; and say, Good Lord be mercifull to mee, my condition is very tickle; If now I be deceived, then fare well comfort.

Was not *Cain* and *Judas* vexed and disquieted, and yet damned?

This is a great point of wisedome, and sinks many a Christian; (I know what I say,) as it is with child-bearing, a woman when her throwes come often and strong, there is some hope of deliverance; but when her throwes goe away, commonly the child dies, and her life too. So it is in this great worke of contrition, which is nothing else, but the child-birth of the soule; when your throwes goe away, take heed that your salvation goes not too; Once you could say, the Minister spake home to my heart, I remember the time full well; Why then what becomes of all your sorrow? You can be as carnall and as secure as ever? It is certaine you are in child-bearing, but your throwes have left you, and your brokennesse of heart is gone, and therefore you are in an ill case, surely at some low ebbe of grace.

Againe, if a mans heart bee soundly broken,
though

though he fall into some sinne, he may be recalled ; but if hee have not his heart soundly broken, hee is undone. If the foundation be naught, the building must needs fall ; So it is in this preparation of the soule for Christ, if this be naught, all comes to naught ; therefore be so much the more fearefull of your soules, because your condition is so much the more tickle in this, than in any thing else, and rather desire soundnesse than quietnesse.

2. Secondly, when God stirres, doe you stirre your hearts too, be you stabbed further, and make the blow goe deeper ; therefore wheresoever any truth goeth neere thy heart, and awakens thee, looke up to heaven, and blesse God for it ; and labour to drive the naile home to the head, and make the salve sinke into the bottome ; And let me advise you to this, when your soules are wrought upon by any reproofes or admonitions, take that truth, and labour to maintaine the power of it upon your hearts all the weeke after ; and let your soules be awed by it.

3. Thirdly, consider what thy soule findes to bee most evill and detestable, whether it be poverty or disgrace, or losse of liberty ; and then (marke what I say) get up thy heart higher in the very apprehension of sinne as it is sinne : and let thy soule be more affected with the vilenesse of sinne, than of any other hardshipp whatsoever ; As thus, suppose thy heart be very proud, if shame and disgrace befall thee ; Oh how doth thy heart shake in the apprehension of it, thou canst live no longer, except some honour come : Now sin is worse then shame, there-

therefore looke up to heaven, and say, Oh my heart did shake with shame, but sinne is farre worse, for, what if the Lord take away my honour, that hee hath promised to such as feare his name? and what if he blot my name out of the booke of life, therefore sin is worst of all; This is certaine, there is no evill the soule feares or findes, but sinne is the cause of it, but the separation of the soule from the Lord is the greatest evill, and sinne is the cause of it, and therefore rest not till thy soule shake in the apprehension of it. This is the next way to be above punishment or any thing else.

Now I come to the fruits of godly sorrow, which are from these words, *They said to Peter and the other Apostles, Men and brethren what shall we doe?* In these words there are three things presumed; and three things plainly expressed.

First, there are three things presumed; they did see themselves in a miserable and damnable condition, as if they had said; Hell is now gaping; it is but turning of the ladder, and wee goe to hell for ever, *Men and brethren, what shall we doe?*

Secondly, they themselves were ignorant, and could not direct themselves what to doe to come out of this estate, and therefore they said, *Men and brethren, advise us what to do:* if there be any help, yee know it.

Yet still there is a secret kinde of hope, and the heart suspects, that it may & will be otherwise with them, they do not say, there is nothing to be done; no, they say; *What shall we doe?* surely there is some way to finde helpe, if we could tell it.

Again,

1.

2.

3.

Againe, there are three things plainly expressed in these words; they make an open and plaine confession of their sinnes; when they were sicke at the heart, they could make open confession, and lay the hand upon the sore; and say, If there be any vile wretches under heaven, we are they.

2. Secondly, a thorough resolution against their sinnes, and a hatred of the same, as if they had said, We are resolved to do any thing, whatsoever it is, we care not, so we may thwart our sinnes.

3. The last thing expressed, is a sequestration of the soule from this sin, the soule falls off from them, and bids farewell to all cursed courses.

First, I come to the three things presumed; and because I shall have occasion afterward to handle the two former, I will begin with the last of the three, which is this, *Men and brethren, what shall wee doe?* Surely there is some course to be taken; is there not? you that are *Gods Prophets*, tell us if there be any hope for such poore distressed sinners as we are.

Doctrine

So the Doctrine is this, there is a secret hope of mercy, wherewith God supports the hearts of those that are truly broken hearted for their sins; howsoever these men did see themselves miserable, yet they did not throw off all, and say, *Men and brethren* there is no hope for us, therefore we will heare no more; but, seeing we must goe to hell, we will take our pleasure while we live here in the world, while we may, and if wee must be damned, wee will be damned for some thing; No, these people had some hope that they should finde mercy, the Lord bruised the heart, but he did not breake it; the Lord will
not

not quench the smoking flax, but kindles it further, and the Lord drawes on the worke of the soule, and plucks it to himselfe, and makes it looke up to him, and wait upon him for help and mercy.

I confesse, it is true, that sometimes the soule in some desperate fit, (and in some horror of heart, when temptation growes violent and long, and the distempers of a mans heart stirre exceedingly) may seeme to cast off all, and resolve with *David* when he had beene long pursued by *Saul*; *I shall one day fall by the hand of Saul*; So the soule saith, God will one day leave mee, and I shall perish; And as *David* saith in another place, *All men are lyers*, that is, they said, I shall bee King of Israel, but they are all deceived; *They are all lyers*; but it was in his haste, in a proud, impatient, haughty humour of soule.

Psa. 77. 6.
13.

This is our nature, if God buckle not to our bow, and heare us not even when wee will; then (in a proud humor) we are apt to say, Oh my sinnes wil never be pardoned, and I shal never get ground against my corruptions. A man that is in a swoone, lies as if he were dead, but yet hee comes to himselfe againe, and lookes up and speakes; So how ever the soule in some unruly humour is driven to a swoone, and thinkes it impossible to finde mercie, or overcome his corruptions; yet still he recovers againe, and the soule that is truly broken for sinne, is upheld; as *Jonas* said, *I am cast out of thy presence, I am even sinking, yet will I looke towards thy holy temple*; So howsoever the soule may be overwhelmed in a drunken fit of pride, or impatience;

Jonah 2. 4.

yet after the soule hath prayed, it saith, I will wait upon God for mercy.

God deales with poore sinners in this case, as men doe that pound pretious powder, as Bezar stone or the like, to make some potion withall, they will breake it, and pound it all to pieces, yet they cover it up close, and will not loose the least sand of it; as they breake it, so they keepe it close that none be lost: So when God doth purpose to doe good to your soules, hee will breake you, and melt you; and then you thinke he hath cast you off in his anger; No, no, he is pounding of you, but he will preserve those soules notwithstanding, and will not lose such poore sinners whom he purposeth to doe good unto.

The soule
hath ma-
ny sha-
kings.

As it is with pocket Dyalls, a man may shake them this way and that way, but they are still northward by vertue of the Loadstone; so there are many shakings in the soule, sometime it seareth God will not be mercifull, sometimes it hopes that hee will; thus it is tossed to and fro, but still it is heaven-ward, and there is a hope that it may bee otherwise: For the Lord holds the soule by a secret vertue to himselfe, and drawes the heart to seeke for mercy.

Luk. 15.
18.

When the *Prodigall* child was brought to a desperate strait, hee began to consider what hee had done, whereas before he said, Shall I ever be a slave in my fathers family? But at last when all was spent, what doth he doe? he saith, It is true, I can looke for no helpe and favour, and I cannot tell whether my *Father* will receive me or no; yet my
Fathers

Fathers servants have bread enough, and shall I starve for hunger; O wretch that I am, I have left a kinde fathers house; yet, come what will, I will come againe, and say, Father, I have sinned; Thus the soule thinks with it selfe, Oh the many sweet and gracious calls that I have had! how often hath Christ come home to my heart, and desired entrance? and yet I shut the doore upon him: shall I now goe home to the Lord Iesus Christ? How justly may he reject mee that have rejected him? he may dampe me; and yet he may save me; and therefore I will wait upon him for mercy: thus the soule will not off from God, but it hath a secret hope wherewith the Lord keeps the heart to himselfe.

The reason is, because unlesse the Lord should leave this hope in the heart, it would utterly bee overthrowne with despaire: You that make nothing of your loose thoughts, and vaine speeches, I tell you, if God did set but one sinfull thought upon thy heart, thy soule would sinke under it, and the Lords wrath would drive thee to mervallous desperation: were it not that the Lord doth uphold thee with one hand, as he beats thee downe with the other; it were impossible but the soule should despaire, (as the proverb is,) But for hope the heart would breake. Who can stand under the Almighty hand of God, unlesse hee doth uphold him? God hath broken off the sinner by this sorrow, but he will not throw him to hell: As the Gardiner cuts off a graft to plant it into a new stocke, not to burne it: So the Lord cuts off a sinner from all abomination, but he wil not cast him into hel; the Lord

Reason 1

melts the heart of a poore sinner, but consumes him not, but as the Goldsmith melts his gold, not to consume it all away, but to make it a better vessel: So the Lord melts a poore sinner to make him a vessell of glory: the Lord will fire those proud hearts of yours, and clip off those knotty lusts; but if you belong to him, he will leave a little remainder of hope, that you shall be formed and fashioned, not consumed.

It is the argument of the Lord by the *Prophet*,
Hee will come and dwell with, and refresh the broken soule, and hee will not contend for ever, lest the Spirit should faile before him: If the Lord should let in but one scattering shot of his vengeance into the heart, it were enough to drive the soule to despaire, but God will lay no more upon us then will doe good to us.

Reason.

2.

Secondly, if the Lord did not leave this hope in the heart, a mans indeavours in the use of the meanes, would be altogether killed: if there bee no hope of good, then there is no cate of using the meanes, whereby any good may bee obtained. Good is the loadstone of all our endeavours; a man will not labour for nothing: *despaire* kills a mans labours, and plucks up the roote of all his endeavours. If there bee any good present, hope makes us labour to encrease it; if any good bee to come, hope labours to attaine it: But good there must be.

So hope provokes the soule to use the meanes, and say, I am a damned man, but if there be any hope, I will pray, and heare, and fast; who knows

but

but God may shew mercy to my poore soule?

I. We may here take notice of the meruallous tenderneſſe, and the loving nature of God in dealing with poore ſinners; that in all his courſes of juſtice remembers ſome mercy; and in all the poſitions of his wrath ſtill he drops in ſome cordials of comfort: hee deales not with us as he might; but ſo, as might be moſt comfortable every way, and uſefull to worke upon our hearts, and to draw our ſoules home unto himſelfe. Should the Lord come out againſt a poore ſinner, and in his wrath let fly againſt him, his ſoule would ſinke downe under him; but bleſſed be God, that hee doth not deale with our hearts as we deſerve; if hee were as rigorous againſt us, as we have beene rebellious againſt him, wee ſhould ſinke in ſorrow, and fall into deſpaire, never to be recovered any more.

But as the Lord batters us, ſo he releeveth us; as we may ſee in *Saul*, hee had gotten letters to *Damascus*, and now hee hoped, being Generall of the field, to bind and to imprifon all, and he would not ſpare the poore Chriſtians a jot; but Chriſt meets him in the field, and threw him downe, and might have killed him too: but the Lord deſired rather that he might be humbled than confounded; I can not read that ever he ſhew'd his letters, but lay'd all flat downe before the Lord; and ſo was accepted; the Lord ſhew'd him his miſery, yet hee let him not periſh there, but gives him a little breife of comfort.

When the Lord dealt with the children of *Hebel*, he ſaid, *I will allure her, and bring her into the wil-*

Hosea 2.

15.

Ios. 7. 24.

dernesse, and there I will give her the valley of Achor for the doore of hope; When Achan was stoned for stealing the wedge of gold; the Israelites called it the valley of Achor, and to it is called to this day.

The valley of Achor is the valley of trouble, of stoning. So the Lord doth here; hee draweth the soule into the wilderness of sorrow for sinne, but doth hee leave the soule there? no, there is the doore of hope also, and there the soule shall sing as in former times. And hereupon the soule saith, There is some hope that God will doe good unto me for all this; there is hope the Lord is melting me, to make me a vessell of glory: that's a gloomy night when there is neither Moone nor Candle to be seene: so though the soule be mervailous gloomy and heavy, yet there is some crevise of light and consolation let into the heart, still chearing and refreshing it: the Lord knowes what metall we are made of, and remembers that wee are but dust: therefore he so corrects us, that he may leave an inkling of mercy and favour in our hearts.

Psal. 103.

Otherfore let us admire & blesse this good God; and not quarrel with his Ministers nor providence, and say, Other men have comfort, and therefore why am I so troubled and disquieted? how now? it is endlessse mercy that thou livest, therefore down with thy proud heart, and stifle those distempers of Spirit, and say, The Lord hath broken & wounded me, but blessed be his name, that I may come to Church, & that he hath not dealt with me as I have deserved, but in goodnesse and mercy; I hope God in his season will doe good to my soule.

Secondly,

Secondly, let us bee wise to nourish this same blessed worke in our hearts for ever; let us have our hearts more and more strengthened, because thereby our hearts will bee more and more enabled to beare and undergoe any thing; if you have but a little glimpse of hope, cover it, and labour to maintaine it, and if ever God let in any glimpse of mercy into your hearts, let it not goe out: it is ever good to take that way that God takes; the Lord sustaines our hearts with hope: hope is the sinewes of the soule, therefore strengthen it.

As a Marriner that is tost with a tempest in a dark night, when he sees no starres, he casts anchor, and that cheares him; this hope is the anchor of the soule, whereby it lookes out, and expects mercy from God: the poore soule seeth no light nor comfort, nothing but the wrath of an angry God; and hee saith, God is a just God, and a jealous God; even that God whose truth I have opposed is displeased with me, then the soule is tossed and troubled, and runnes upon the rocks of despaire; how shall the soule be supported in this condition? You will finde this true one day, therefore looke to it before: you vile drunkards are now sayling in a faire gale of pleasure, and carnall delight, but when the Lords wrath shall seaze upon you, when hee shall let in the flashes of hell fire, then you are tossed, sometimes up to heaven, now downe to hell: therefore cast anchor now, and this hope will uphold you, for this *hope is called the anchor of the soule*. Thou dost not yet see the Lord refreshing of thee,

Vse 2.

Heb. 6.19.

Jonah 3.

9.

1 Thes. 5.

8.

but it may be otherwise. The people of *Ninivie* said; *Who knowes but God may repent*; this upheld their hearts, and made them seeke to the Lord in the use of the meanes, and the Lord had mercy on them. If you belong unto the Lord, he will come against those drunken proud hearts, and rebellious hearts of yours, and dragge them downe to hell, and make them sorrow for their finnes. And remember this against that day, *Who knowes but the Lord may shew mercy*? and therefore yet heare, and pray, and fast, and seeke unto him for mercy. Wee fence those parts of our bodies most that are most pretious, and the hurt whereof is most dangerous. Hope is called the *helmet of salvation*, and the assurance of Gods love is the head of a Christian, now take away a Christians head, and he is cleane gone: the devill ever labours for that, and saith, You come to heaven? prove it: Loe, you thinke God hath neede of drunkards and adulterers in heaven? and will God provide a crowne of glory for his professed enemies? Hath God made heaven a hogstie for such uncleane wretches as you are? No, no, there is no such expectation of mercy: this wounds the head of the soule, but *hope* is the *helmet* that covers the head of a Christian, makes him say, I confesse I am as bad as any man can say of me: heaven is a holy place, and I have no goodnesse at all in me, yet there is hope the Lord may breake this proud heart of mine, and take away these distempers of Spirit: Now by this meanes the head of a Christian is kept sure.

But some will say, how shall wee maintaine
and

and cherish this hope in our hearts.

The meanes are especially three. First, take notice of the *All-sufficiencie* of God, as hee hath revealed himselfe in his Word; say not as many do, I cannot conceive it, or I cannot finde it, but what doth the Word say? Is not God able to pardon thy sinnes? (away then with those, I cannot conceive it, and the like :) Is there any thing hard for me, saith God? Whatsoever thy estate is, there is nothing hard to him that hath hardnesse at command; when our Saviour said, *It is as easie for a Camell to goe through the eye of a needle, as for a rich man to goe into heaven*; Good Lord, said they, *Who can be saved*? But Christ said, *With God all things are possible*; If you looke unto man how he is glued to the world, so that all the Ministers under heaven cannot pull him away, but still hee will lie, and cozen; Reason and Judgement cannot conceive how this man should be saved, but with God all things are possible: See what the *Apostle* saith, *Abraham above hope beleevved under hope, that hee should be the Father of many nations*; This he did, because he knew he which had promised was able to performe it: and this did feede his hope, hee did beleve above hope in regard of the creature, under hope in regard of God. As if he had said, I have a dead body, but God is a living God; and *Sarah* hath a barren wombe, but God is a fruitfull God.

It may be thou sayest, if any exhortation would have wrought upon me, then my heart might have beene brought to a better passe; but can this stubborn heart of mine be made to yeeld? And can these

Answ.

Meanes how to maintain our hope, whē God seemes to walk contrary to us.

I.

Math. 19.
24.

Rom. 4.
18. 19.

Object.

these

these strong corruptions of mine be subdued?

Answe.

Howsoever thou canst not doe it, yet God can quicken thee, and although thou art a damned man, yet he is a mercifull God, this all-sufficiency of God is a hooke, whereon our soules hang; when the *Apostles* had prayed that the minds of the *Ephesians* might be opened, and that they might be able to know the love of Christ; because some one might say, How shall we know that which is above knowledge, the text saith, *Now to him that is able to doe abundantly above all that we can think or aske, according to his mighty power that worketh in us, to him be glory*: As though he had said, Though you cannot thinke or aske as you should, yet God is able to doe exceeding abundantly more than wee can thinke or aske; so then no more but this, we are not able of our selves to think a good thought, yet there is sufficient power in God, and though wee are dead-hearted, & damned wretches, yet there is sufficient salvation in God. Let us hang the handle of hope on this hooke.

*Ephes. 3.
19.20.*

Means 2.

Secondly, the freeness of Gods promise mercifully lifts up the head above water; as the beggar saith, The doale is free, why may not I get it as well as another. This sometimes dasheth our hopes: when the soule begins to think what mercy is offered, he saith;

Object.

Oh! many are they that have it; could I feare God as I should, and seeke for mercy as I ought, then there were some hope; but I have no heart to endeavour or desire after any mercy, and I cannot bring my soule, nor submit my will to yeeld,
and

and therefore shall I ever have mercie?

Why not thou too? Doth God sell his mercy? No, he gives it freely, God keepes open house: Oh the freeness of that mercy and goodnesse that is in God! he requires nothing of thee to procure it, but he shewes mercy because he will shew mercy; thou hast no will, but God hath a will: and his shewing of mercy depends not on thy will, but upon his owne free-will: It is true, God will make a man will, and break his heart, because no man otherwise can be saved; but it is as true, that Christ will give you brokennesse of heart as well as heaven and salvation. *I will take away the heart of stone, and give you a heart of flesh, and cause you to walke in my wayes,* saith the Lord: hold this truth in thy soule: As there is no worth in the soule that can deserve any thing at Gods hands: so there is no sinne (the sinne against the holy Ghost onely excepted) that can hinder the freeness of Gods grace from saving us: if thou belong to him, hee will hale thee to heaven, and pull thee from hell, he will make thee lie in the dust, and wait for mercy, and come groveling for his grace, and that freely, without any thing on thy part: *Who is a God like to thee (saith Micah) who pardonest iniquity, because mercy doth please thee?*

The Lord sheweth mercy, not because thou canst please him, but because mercy pleaseth him. And in *Esay* he saith, *I am he that blot out thy offences, for my owne names sake.*

But the soule may say, they were Gods people that did humble themselves, and they had hearts to feare him.

Answer.

*Ezech. 36.
26.*

*Micah. 7.
18.*

*Esay 34.
24, 25.*

Object.

See

Answ.

See that in the twenty fourth verse, *Thou hast brought me no corne, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifice: but thou hast wearied mee with thy transgressions*, yet the Lord saith, *I am he that pardoneth thy sinnes*: Thou sayest, if thou couldst pray, and humble thy selfe, there were hope of mercy; the text doth not say, *It is a sinner*, but it is I, a God, that must doe it, this is the freeness of his grace.

Object.

But some may object, Is it possible that a man should receive any mercy, and yet be so stubborne and rebellious? This makes way for drunkards to live as they list, and yet think to goe to heaven.

Answ.

I answer, It is true, the Lord will pardon them if they belong to him, but hee will doe it with a witnesse: the Lord will dowze that soule of thine in the veine of his vengeance, but hee will pardon thee too: God will pardon thy sinne in Christ, but hee will make thee feeble the bitterness of sinne first.

Means 3

Lastly, consider the abundance of mercy and goodness that is in God, whereby hee not onely strives with us in the midst of all rebellions, but he is more mercifull then we are or can be rebellious: this helps the heart of another thing that cuts it. For when the soule seeth all his sinnes for number, for nature, so many, and so abominable, he saith,

Object.

Can mercy be shewed to such a wretch as I am?

Answ.

Yes, for as God is *all-sufficient*, and his promise free, so he hath plenty of mercy for the worst, hee exceeds in mercy all the sins that can be; (except that against the holy Ghost) and therefore the soule throwes it selfe upon this; the *Apostle* saith, *Where*

sinne

*sinne abounds, grace abounds much more: lest any man should say, Let us sinne that grace may abound: the text saith in another place, Whose damnation is just. This knocks off the fingers; though a froward wretch abuse God and Grace, yet mercy will overcome the heart in this case, but it will cost him deare; though thou turnest the grace of God into wantonnesse, the Lord will turne that wantonnesse of thine into bitternesse; the Lord will sting that heart of thine one day, and make thee see whether it be good to forsake mercy when it is offered; it will be easier for *Sodome* than for thee, when thou shalt see a company of poore *Sodomites* fry in hell; howsoever God may bring thee to heaven, yet he will make thee fry in hell, and hee will make thee think a *Sodomite* to be in a better condition for the present than thou art.*

But some will say, God cannot in justice save such a wretch as I am.

Object.

For answer to this, see what *Saint James* saith, *Mercy rejoiceth, or triumpheth, over Justice*: howsoever *Justice* saith, he must be plagued, yet *Mercy* saith, *Christ hath made a plentiful satisfaction for him*: so then if God be all-sufficient, and his promise free, and his mercy superabundant, then wee may be stirred up to hope for mercy from God, our hearts may be supported herein for ever.

Answer.

Now I come to some other particulars that are plainly exprest in our text.

First, they made a free and open confession of their sinnes, they did not stay till the *Apostle* went to their houses, but they went to him, and said,

Men

Men and brethren, you have spoken against the sinne of murther, and we confesse we are guilty of this sinne.

Doctrin The Doctrine from hence is this: When the heart is truly broken for sinne, it will be content to make open and free confession thereof; or thus, Sound contrition brings forth bottom-confession. *Men and brethren, what shall wee doe to be saved?* as if they had said, The truth is, wee have heard of the fearefull condition of such as have killed the Lord Jesus, and wee confesse whatsoever you have said, he was persecuted by us, and blasphemed by us, we are they that cryed, Crucifie him, crucifie him; wee would have eaten his flesh, and made dice of his bones; wee plotted his death and gloried in it; these are our sins, and haply a thousand more that then they revealed; and this is remarkable, *They goe to Peter and the other Apostles*, they did not goe to the *Scribes and Pharisees*, and that cursed crew.

Note.

Whence observe this by the way; when the soule is thus truly broken, generally it will never repaire to such as are carnall and wicked men: for these people knew that the *Scribes and Pharisees* had their hands as deeply imbrued in Christs blood as themselves; and besides, they knew them to be such naughty packes, that they would rather encourage them in their sins, than any way ease them, & recover them from the same: therefore they went to the *Disciples*, because they were holy and gracious persons, and willing to succour them; and it is certaine, that soule was never truly broken for sin, that goes for help to such as are guilty of the same; it is suspi-

tious

tious that these men goe onely to stop the mouth of conscience, but never to have conscience awakened. You see our converts here went to the *Apostles*, not to the *Scribes* and fellow-murderers; but this by the way onely: I goe on in the former point.

A broken hearted sinner knowes more by himselfe than any man can doe, when a man is pinched with famine or drought, he will open his wants fully and freely, and so a man that is sicke, and hath some heavy disease upon him, will tell of more paines and gripings than any Physitian can doe: So it is with the soule that is deadly sicke in the sight of his sinnes and abominations.

But may not a wicked man that never was truly broken-hearted, make a large and open confession of his sinnes?

Quest.

I confesse that in the horror of conscience hee may doe it, but with the *dog* he returns to his former vomit, and with the *Sow* to her wallowing in the mire; the Hogge that is kept in a cleane meadow, will looke somewhat white; but if he comes from thence, he will lie downe in the first durty puddle hee comes at; so there are some sinners that have beene well trained up, and live in a good family, they are a little cleansed; but when they come to live among wicked companions, they grow as prophane as the rest; and yet all this while they are hogges, and will murmur at others that are more holy than themselves; Now the dogge is he, that hath had his eyes opened, and his conscience awakened, and some horror laid upon his soule, and this doth make him disgorge himselfe for a while,

Ans.

while, to ease him of his horror; but when that man returnes to his sinnes, hee will snarle and bite too, and fall heavily upon Gods people, so much the more because he hath confest his sinnes; thus it was with *Judas*, hee swallowed downe his *thirty pence*, but God made him come and acknowledge his sinne, and take shame to himselfe, and yet a *Judas*, a devill, and at this day in hell. I tell you, this his confession out-bids most people in our generation; the fish is content to nibble at the bait, and so is taken with the hooke, and when it hath the hooke and bait too, it would be rid of both: so when horror of conscience hath fastened upon the soule of a man because of sin, he could be content to vomit his sinne and all up, and yet hee is a very beast.

Quest.

But doth hearty confession argue true contrition?

Answ.

I answer, there is a kinde of confession which no man attaines unto, but he hath a broken heart; *Judas* nor no carnall heart under heaven comes to this, and you must know, there is no word spoken by the one but may be spoken by the other, and therefore the difference is not from the words, but from the inward frame of the heart: And for the opening of this truth I will propound and shew these two things.

First, the confession of a poore broken hearted sinner.

Secondly, I will shew you when the Saints of God are called to confesse.

For the first, the difference betweene the true and

and the false confession, is discovered in these three particulars.

First, they differ in the end, a broken hearted sinner confesseth his sinnes, that he may take shame to himselfe, and glorifie God, this is the frame of the soule that truly confesseth his sinnes, hee doth it to honour the *Gospel* which he hath so much dishonoured, to discover the vilenesse of his person and of his sinne, that hee hath so much set up; hee is willingly content that the glory of it may bee Gods, and the shame his owne. Consider that passage of the good *Thiefe* upon the *Crosse*, when the reprobate was going to be executed for his sinne, hee railed upon Christ, (whence observe by the way) a wicked man will be a wretch though hee should goe to hell presently; now when hee was railing, see what the *Good thiefe* replies; *Fearst thou not God? wee have sinned and are justly punished for our sinnes*, to die and goe to hell too, if God be not the more mercifull; this man, you see, was content to fall out with himselfe, and his sinnes, and to honour the justice and holinesse of God in condemning of him. It is said in *Ezekiel*, *They shall remember their wayes that were not good, and shall bee ashamed*, that is, they shall rake shame to themselves, they shall not shrink for the same; a gracious heart cannot tell what to doe to make sinne, and it selfe base enough before God, that his soule and sin may fall out one with another, as in the example of *Zacharias*; whereas the confession of a carnall hypocrite comes not so currenly off, it sticketh in his teeth, hee begins to confesse somerthing,

P

and

Difference betweene true and false confession of sins.

I.

Luk. 23. 42

Note.

Ezek. 16.
16.

Luk. 19. 28

and then he stands; he saith something, and calls it back againe, and is loath to take any shame for the evill committed: and therefore haply he will come when he is called, and goe away and confesse nothing at all; Nay, if a Minister heare any thing of him, hee will hide it and tell a flat lie, rather than take shame to himselfe for it: it is true, a carnall hypocrite may confesse sometimes to give the Minister content, as commonly such do; he may confesse, to get inward with a man, and to get commendations; nay, he may confesse, to sin more freely without suspicion; for charity beleeves this, that when a man hath confessed his sinne, hee will never sinne in that kinde againe; nay, sometimes hee doth it to stop the mouth of conscience, and therefore when conscience is full of horror, to quiet conscience, and to still the clamor thereof, he is content to reveale his sinne, that so he may have some secret peace for his sinne: thus farre they differ in their ends.

2.

Secondly, they differ in their grounds: the cause and ground of a broken-hearted sinner, it is from the loathsomnesse and vilenesse that the heart seeth in sinne, and therefore it confesseth to free it selfe from that sinne, and to let out all those abominations that are so loathsome and tedious to him; as the sinner that is truly burthened is to confesse all his sinnes, so especially those that are most loathsome and secret, even those sins whereby the heart hath bin most estranged from God: for as before the soule did confesse sinne freely, because hee was content to take shame to himselfe, so now he doth it to rid himselfe of the same. Then a man feesles
sinne

finne kindly, when it goeth to the very inwards of the soule; it is in this case with a broken-hearted sinner, as it is with that part of a mans body that is impostumed, or the like; when the impostume is ripe, if it be launced to the quick; the very coare and all comes out; but if it be pricked with a pin, there may some corrupt matter come out, but the coare remaines yet in it still: so it is with an impostumed heart, when a man is truly pierced with his abominations, hee is content to lay open the most inward corruptions of all, that there may be a perfect killing of all: nay, it labours to sweepe out the most secret finnes of all, without any ifs, or ands, and he saith, Oh this proud, wretched, adulterous heart of mine, hath been my bane, and it will be my destruction for ever, if God be not more mercifull, now the coare and all comes out; whereas the hypocrite that feeles onely the feare, and horror, and punishment of sin, executed or threatned, he confesseth no more than may procure his ease; hee desires not so much to have his corruptions removed, as to be freed from horror; And therefore a hypocrite will scumme over all his confessions, his talke will be a hundred miles from his finnes, he never comes to that maine sinne which keepes his heart from God; and it is remarkable, one man complaines he is troubled with wandring thoughts in hearing the Word, and his soule is taken aside with strange distempers; but follow that soule home, and you shal commonly finde some base corruptions that take up his heart; and another man complaines of his hard heart, it stirres not at the

The hol-
low-hear-
ted con-
fession of
hypocrite.

word of God, and Gods Judgements doe not melt him, when yet in the meane time hee nourisheth that pride, and selfe-uncleannesse, that is the cause thereof, and there are many besides these: as it is with a dogge, hee doth not gorge up his meat because hee loathes it, but because his stomacke is troubled with it, and therefore when his paine is over, hee takes it with greedinesse againe; so it is with an hypocrite, his heart is burthened with extreame sorrow, and therefore hee throwes out so much as did trouble and gall his conscience, and may worke him some ease; but afterwards he returns to it againe; and this is the cause why wee have so many revoltors, and back-sliders, after such open confessions; they confesse onely to ease themselves of the horror, and therefore when the horror is gone, they fall to their old sinne againe, whereas a sound Christian doth confesse his sin, onely from the loathsomnesse of it.

3. Thirdly, the soule that is truly broken, makes confession with an inward resolution never to meddle with sinne any more; yet all this while the soule is full of feare and suspicion, for feare of falling into those sinnes againe, therefore it desires rather to discover it selfe by desires and wishes, then any confidence in it selfe; and therefore the soule saith, O that the Lord would once give me power against these corruptions; Oh how happy should I be: but alas I have no power of my selfe; the soule is willing to fling it selfe into the armes of Gods mercy, and to commit himselfe wholly to the meanes of grace, that God may get himselfe honour

honour by him; onely hee desires him to be good unto him by giving of him power against his corruptions.

Whereas the hypocrite that is in feare of some judgement, and the wrath of God hath seized upon his soule; that he may get ease, will promise any thing, and be mervailous open, and yet confident in himselfe, and say, If God would give me health, and raise mee up againe, all the world shall see I will be a new man, and they shall see how holy, and how carefull, and how exact I will be: yet, poore soule, when he is out of his trouble, hee returns to his vomit, and is worse than before, and so much the worse, because hee hath made an open confession. As it is with a debtor, an honest man comes freely and doth acknowledge his debt, and desires the Creditor to satisfie himselfe with his body and goods, hee desires he may be no loser by him, he suspects he shall not be able to pay him, but he hopes, so farr as he is able, to give him content: but another cunning mate promiseth to pay all, if he will give him further day, but intends no such matter. Just so it is with a soule that is truly broken for sinne, hee layes himselfe in Gods presence, and referres himselfe into Gods hands, and saith, The truth is, Lord, I know, this proud corrupt heart of mine will not yeeld, it will deceive me: I am afraid I shall not be able to walke holily: take this heart of mine, and doe what thou wilt with it, onely purge out my sinne and corruption: this is the manner of his confession.

But, is every man bound thus freely and openly *Object.*

to confesse his finnes ? I answer, the doctrine saith, When hee is called to it. But you will say, When is a man bound and called to make confession?

Ans.
When a
man is
bound to
confesse
his sins.

I.

For answer, I will shew it in foure conclusions. First, when the soule hath had a true sight of sinne, and hath confessed it to the Lord abundantly, and through Gods mercy hath gotten some assurance of the pardon thereof, then hee need not looke to men for pardon, because the end of confession is accomplished already. A man therefore confesseth his sinne, that he may finde some helpe against it: not that a Minister can absolve or pardon any (as the Popish shavelings imagine) but that hee may have the direction, helpe, and prayers of a godly Minister.

2.

Iam. 5. 16.

Secondly, if we have wronged any body that we have conversed withall; though God hath pardoned the sinne, yet we are to confesse it, that we may make peace, and pray one for another; this is the meaning of that place, *Confesse your finnes one to another, and pray one for another.*

3.

Thirdly, if a man have used all meanes ordinary and extraordinary, and hath fasted, and prayed, and sought the Lord for pardon of sin, and strength against it, and yet his conscience remains troubled, and he sinkes under the burden of his corruptions, in this case a man is called to confesse his finnes to a faithfull Minister. Indeed a man may confesse them to a faithfull Christian, but it is Gods ordinance to confesse them to a faithfull Minister, not that a Minister can pardon his finnes, but

but onely to declare when hee is fitted, and to apply mercy accordingly. It is not a matter of complement, but a duty commanded: it is in this case with the soule, as it is with a mans body; hee that is able by his owne skill and his kitchin-physick to cure himselfe, hath no neede to seeke to the Physitian: but if it be beyond his owne skill, and if kitchin-physick will doe no good, then hee is bound to seeke out to a Physitian, unlesse hee will be his owne murderer. It is just so with the soule of a man that is sorrowfull for sin: when hee hath conscientiously used all meanes, and yet his closet-prayers, and his closet-fastings will not doe the deed, then hee is bound to seeke out to a faithfull Minister, for he is the Physitian that God hath appointed, whereby all the sicknesses of the soule may be eased and cured.

4.
Lastly, if a man have beene guilty of common open sinns, and it is knowne abroad that hee hath beene an open swearer and adulterer, if God hath broken his heart thorowly for his sinnes, and he lies (it may be) upon his death-bed, and now enjoys the company of a faithfull Minister, or some holy Christian, hee is bound to acknowledge his sinnes, that as God hath been dishonoured by him, so now he may honour God, and shame himselfe, and discourage the hearts of those wicked wretches that have shared with him in the sinne: if ever hee be truly broken, and if God throw him on his sicke-bed, and these things be layed to his charge, he will cry out of himselfe, and say, Oh I have hated the light of Gods truth, I did persecute the cause of

godlinesse, *I was a persecutor and blasphemer*, saith *Paul*: so it will be with your proud and rebellious hearts, if ever God open your eyes, and awaken your consciences, as they must be either here, or in kell.

Therefore when your companions come about you, cry shame of your selves, and say, The Lord knowes, and all the Country knowes, that I have beene a drunkard, and an adulterer; it is the gall of my heart. Now if God had not bin mercifull unto me, I had drunk, and drunk my last: it hath cost me deare, and so it will be with you too. It is strange to see how God throwes some upon their death-beds, and fills their consciences full of horreur, and yet a man cannot wrest a word from them. Nay, though all their drunken companions come about them, they have not a word to say to them. I doe not thinke that the heart of any Christian will endure it, if ever God breake his heart kindly.

Thus you see what man is bound to confesse his sinne; this is farre enough from the tyrannicall confession of that strange Popish doctrine of auricular confession: they hold, all men are bound, whatsoever their condition be, whether their sinnes be pardoned or unpardoned, they are bound to confesse all their mortall sinnes, and to expect their pardon authoritatively from the Priests hand, upon the paine of great matters. The aime of the Papists herein is, first, to snare mens consciences; and secondly, to picke mens purses: for when a man hath confessed his mortall sinnes, his conscience is snared, and then they must give so much money for

Popish confession,
what.

for the pardon of them agreeable to the offence. Now wee bind no man upon paine to come necessarily; but if hee can get pardon from God in the use of the meanes, and get power against his corruptions, in this case wee enioyne no man to confesse; but when the Saints doe come, it is not because wee will or can sell pardons, but onely to fit them for mercy. And this is the truth, and that our Church holds.

This falls mervailous heavy & foule upon those that are so farre from this duty, that they are opposite against it, and account it a matter of madnesse and childishnesse, to acknowledge their offences to any man. Men would be comforted in regard of the sorrow they feelee, but they would not be content to open their sinnes, and take shame to themselves: This harbours in the hearts of many carnall wretches, and so they are deprived of the fruit of the Gospell: They thinke it all their cunning, to shift, and shelter, and mince their sinnes, and to keepe them close from the knowledge of the Minister.

Vse 1.

It may be, the wife is sicke, and the husband saith, I pray you shew her some comfort. Why, saith the Minister, what needes shee any comfort, seeing shee was never in distresse? Oh! saith hee, she hath lived an honest quiet woman, and so by this meanes we heare of nothing but good. I would faine wrest this madnesse out of the hearts of carnall wretches. When the Lord hath them upon the racke, then their consciences are full of horror, and they know not which way to take; yet they
scorne

scorne to acknowledge any thing : shall they bee (convicted of their sins, and) such babies, to cry their sins at the Market-crosse? they have a better course than so : for (say they) who knowes it? and let him prove it, or the like. What if no man ever yet knew it? thy owne conscience, and God, knowes it.

If thou goest to a Physitian, thou wilt lay open all thy sores, and all thy paines to him, or else thou expectest no helpe from him; and canst thou looke for any comfort from a Minister, and never discover thy sins, whereby thou art hindered in a good course? men would be comforted, and yet never knew why they were afflicted.

You that keepe your sinnes so close, and maintaine them so tenderly, the God of heaven will plucke those sweet morsels from your moutnes, and lay them upon you, when you would bee rid of them; As a man that is sicke, hee will not send to the Physitian, because hee thinkes hee is able to beare it out, till at last the disease begins to fester inwardly, and all the Physitians under heaven cannot hure him; if he had sent in time, he might have beene eased: so it is with many sinfull creatures, out of a sturdy stoutnesse of heart, they scorne to confesse their corruptions; well, now God opens their eyes, and they begin to say, This is not well, and that is not well; but you will not send for the Minister all this while, if it be horreur of conscience, you will beare it; well, at last you come to your death-beds, and the Lord layes his heavie hand upon you, and then you cry for the Minister and all; Oh, saith one, woe to me because of this adulterous

adulterous heart, this drunkenesse, and this malice, and this madnesse against God and his people; I was a cunning persecutor, and with such a woman I committed adultery, and at last, when he hath ended his confession, he sinks and dies. Now the Minister comes too late, yee will beare the check of conscience, and in time the wound growes sore, and your soule sinkes into irrecoverable miserie; Oh, woe to that soule, this is all because he would not have his heart launced; well, if thou wilt not, then take that curled heart of thine, and expect Gods wrath with it, if thou repent not. See how God deales with a sinner in this kinde; the text saith, *His bones are full of the sinnes of his youth, which shall lye with him in the dust: Although sinne be sweet in his mouth, though hee spare it, and keepe it close as Sugar under his tongue, it is as the gall of Aspes within them;* take heed how you keepe your sins close, when conscience and horreur calls upon you to confesse them; and God hath you upon the racke, and saith, These sinnes you have committed in secret, either confesse them, or they shall turne to the gall of Aspes; if still you will have your sinnes, remember that the God of heaven beares witnesse this day against that soule, that will not come off, but hides his sin; take heed that God say not *Amen*. When thou art going the way of all flesh, then thou wilt cry for mercy, but then the Lord will say, Remember that impostumed heart of thine might have beene launced and cured; but thou wouldst needs keepe thy lusts and corruptions still.

For the Lord Jesus Christs sake now pittie your selves,

Iob 10, 11.
12.

selves, if you desire your everlasting comfort, now take shame to your selves, that you may be for ever glorified; O now lance those proud rebellious hearts of yours, that you may finde some ease; teare now in pieces those wretched hearts, that the coare being let out, the cure may be good & sound.

Vse 2.

Secondly, this reproves the cunning hypocrite, howsoever he is content to be ashamed for his sin, and to shew the foulness of it, yet it is admirable to consider what sly passages and trickes hee will have before hee comes to open any thing; sometimes hee sends for a faithfull Minister, and it is his entendment to confesse his folly, and yet hee goes backe againe and confesseth nothing at all; but if the Lord follow the close hearted hypocrite, and let in some more of his indignation, and make his wrath to seaze upon his soule, then he sets down a resolution to confesse all; and yet there is such dawbing and such secret acknowledgement of sin; it sticks in his teeth, something he will say that may be every man can say against him; & then he speaks of hardness of heart, and of wandering thoughts, and that which even the best of Gods people are troubled withall; but he never comes to those sinfull lusts that lie heaviest upon his soule.

If a man that is sick have a foule stomack, but yet is unfit to vomit, it may be he casts the uppermost up, but the spawne of it remaines; so it is with the hypocrite, he saith something, and now and then a word falls from him, and hee would faine bite it in againe if he could, but there is a witnesse within that must not be scene.

When

When *Rachel* had stoln her Father *Labans* Idols, hee followed after *Jacob* for them: and searched among the stuffe, but *Rachel* being something foolishly addicted that way, sate still upon them, and *Laban* must not search there: So it is with the close hearted hypocrite, hee is content to confesse that which all the world cryes shame of him for, but there is some Idoll lust, as secret uncleannesse, or private theft, that he will not confesse.

Now for the terrour of all such gracelesse persons, I desire to discover two things in the point. First, that this is a mervailous fearefull sinne: Secondly, it is a dangerous sinne.

First, me thinkes the sinne it selfe is like the sinne of *Ananias* and *Saphira*: he sold all that he had, and as the Lord mooved him, and commanded him, hee gave way to it that it should bee given to the poore: But when it was sold, hee kept backe one part of it: and when *Peter* said, *Did you sell it for so much?* Is this all the price? Yes, saith hee. Now marke what *Peter* saith, *Why hath Satan filled thy heart, that thou hast not lyed to man, but to God.* Satan many times steps into the heart; but when hee is said to fill the heart, he shuts out the work of judgment and reason, and the Word, and Spirit, and all good Resolutions in those particular occasions, which concerne a man.

As if Satan should say, Knowledge shall not direct him, the Spirit shall not perswade him, and the word shall not prevaile with his heart: but I will take possession of him in despite of all these; this is Sathans filling of the heart.

Acts 5.3.
opened.

To hide
our finnes,
a fearefull
sinne.

Thus

Thus it is with the Hypocrite : his conscience is awakened, and saith, Thou must confesse thy sinnes, or else thou shalt be damned for them : the Word commands thee, and the Spirit perswades thee to confesse thy sinne ; and hereupon thou saist, This is my condition, and there is no ease nor comfort to be had in private meanes, and therefore I must goe to some faithfull Minister, and reveale my selfe to him : and when thou hast done, thou keepest backe halfe from him, and thou lyest against Conscience, the Word, and Spirit, and all : and when the Minister saith, Is this the bottome of thy sin? Diddest thou not commit such and such a sinne? Oh! no; I was never guilty of any such matter: and yet thou lyest. Marke what I say, this is to have Satan fill thy heart, thou givest up thy heart into the possession of the devill: Knowledge directs thee not, the Spirit perswades not, and the Word prevails not; but the devil crowds into every corner of thy heart, and thou wilt cover thy sins, and so perish for them everlastingly.

2. But secondly, as the sin is vile and odious, so it is as dangerous; *Hee that hideth his sinnes, shall not prosper*, saith the Wiseman. Howsoever thy heart may be still for awhile, yet thou shalt not prosper in thy Family, nor in the Word and Sacraments, but all meanes are accursed to thee, thou shalt receive no mercy at all: hee that confesseth and forsaketh his sinnes, shall finde mercy; but he that confesseth not his sinnes, shall not finde mercy.

As we use to have a nest egge to breed upon, so it is the devils cunning to leave a nest egge, some boosome

bosome lust or other in thy soule, and the devill sits upon this same, as upon a nest egge: and when the devill is cast out by a slight overly confession of your sins, yet there is some secret lust still left in the heart, and that will breed a thousand abominations more in you. For (I beseech you take notice of this) the devill returnes and brings seven devils more than himselfe, and hee hatcheth seven times more uncleannesse than there was before; therefore as you desire that Satan may not fill your hearts, and as you desire to have any means blessed to you; come off kindly and currantly, either not confesse at all, or else confesse currantly, that you may finde mercy in the time of need.

The second Use is for Instruction, to shew us, that a broken-hearted sinner is easily convicted of his sins, and willing to under-goe any reproofe; he that will confesse his sins freely of himselfe, will easily yeeld when hee is called upon to doe it. If the Word lay any thing to his charge, he will not deny it, a man need not bring any witnesses against him: he will never seeke to cover his sin, but if any occasionall passage of speech come, that may discover his sin, he takes it presently, and yeelds to it, & saith, I am the man, I confesse, this is my sin and my folly: he doth not fence his heart against the truth.

To whom shall I looke (saith God) even to a man that hath a contrite heart, and trembles at my word: this is the roote, and this is the fruit: the heart must bee contrite and broken by the hammer of Gods Law, before it can shake at the hearing of the Word; A broken heart comes not to flout

Use 2.

Esaie 66.2.

flout at the Minister, (nay, that is a sturdy heart) but a broken heart shakes at the word of God; if there come a promise, a broken heart trembles lest hee hath no share in it; and if there be any command, he trembles lest hee should not be able to obey it: but if the Lord meet with some maine lust, as secret malice against the Saints of God, and secret uncleannesse, or the like; if the Lord give a wipe at these things in the Word, then this broken heart hath enough, he hath his load, and longs to be private, he remembers that truth; and the wound being fresh bleeds againe, and he mournes againe, and layes hold on his heart, and saith, Good Lord, I was this malicious wretch, I intended this mischief to thy Saints, and (if it had been in my power) I could have sucked their blood, I was that unclean wretch; shall all these sins be pardoned? and shall all these cursed abominations be removed? Can these corruptions be subdued?

Brethren (yee cannot be ignorant how) a wounded heart is affected with every touch, you that have broken hearts you know it, I shall not need to tell you: Therefore when ever the Lord comes to rake in those filthy and drunken hearts of yours, they will shake within you, and you will say, This is my sinne, and these are my abominations, whereby God hath beene so much dishonoured.

Use 3.

The third Use is for exhortation, if you know these things (as I am perswaded you doe) then be intreated in the name of the Lord Jesus to walke in that way which God hath revealed; this is the baseness of our hearts, wee are loath to unbuckle our vile

vile and secret distempers, they are shameful themselves, and yet we are loath to take shame for them. Therefore deal openly and freely with your soules, confesse your sinnes freely, that God may deale comfortably with you; hath the Lord at any time let in this horror into thy soule; and is thy heart now troubled at the word, and after all thy teares, and paines, and meanes using with uprightnesse, do thy corruptions still remaine? are they not yet subdued as they might be? canst thou not get any assurance of the pardon of them? I say then, cast away thy shamefull hiding and concealing of sinne, and doe not say, what will the world and ministers say of me? away with these shifts, God calls thee to confession, the Saints have done it, and thou must, nay, thou wilt doe it, (if ever thy heart be kindly broken, as it should be) in some measure pleasing unto God, and profitable to thy selfe.

But some will say how may we doe it?

For answer thereunto, I will first give some direction how to doe it; Secondly, I will give some motives to worke our hearts to the same.

First, be wise in chusing the party, to whom you must confesse your sinnes, for every wide mouthed vessel is not fit to receive pretious liquor; so this cōfessiō is not to be opened to every carnal wretch, that will blaze it abroad; the minister to whom you confesse, ought to have these three graces.

First, hee must be a skilfull and able Minister of God, one that is trained up, and is master of his Art, and so experienced, that hee may bee able in some measure to find out the nature of the disease:

Object.

Ans.

I.

To whom we should lay open our sinnes by confession.

I.

A skilfull Minister.

(Not that any Minister under heaven can be so wise and holy, as to give pardon to a poore sinner ; but onely he is able ministerially to doe it under God.) He must be able to approove himselfe the Minister of God: hee must have the tongue of the learned, and be able to breake the heart , and prepare the soule for Christ; and then to apply the cooling promises of the Gospel to him.

There are many, who in stead of curing of the soule, kill it, and by popping the Sacrament into a mans mouth, thinke to send him to heaven: but in conclusion send him to hell.

A mercifull
Physician.

Secondly, hee must be a mercifull Physician, one that will pittie a poore soule; they that have experience of trouble and misery in themselves, are most compassionate to others in distresse: hee that hath bin tossed in the Sea, will pittie others that have bin in the same danger. If these people had gone to the *Scribes* and *Pharises*, they had bin well holpen. No, but they went to *Peter*, and therefore found helpe: when *Judas* had sinned, and betrayed his Master, and his soule was full of horror; hee went to the *Pharises* and confessed his sins, but what succour found he? they answered him, *What is that to us?* Hast thou sinned, then beare it, and looke to it thy selfe; so it is with carnall wretches, what comfort yeeld they to a poore distressed conscience? they adde sorrow to sorrow, and say, It is nothing but melancholy, and he hath gotten this by hearing some fiery hot Minister, or by reading too much in some books of election, and reprobation.

Mat. 27. 4

3.
A faithful
Minister
and how
knowne.

Lastly, hee must be a faithfull Minister, one that will

will not fit mens humors, nor answer the desires of their hearts, in speaking what they would have him; but his faithfulness must appeare in two things.

First, in dealing plainly with every one, though a man be his Patron, or of what place or condition soever he be, if hee have a proud heart, he must labour to humble him.

And secondly, as hee must apply a salve sitting for the sore, so he must be faithfull in keeping secret the sinne that is laid open to him, that nothing may fly abroad, no not after his death, except it be in some cases.

Now what remaines, but that you all be moved to take up this duty, and provoke your hearts freely to confesse your evill wayes; to which purpose let me give you three motives.

First, because it is a very honourable thing, and will exceedingly promote the cause of a Christian; you will hardly yeeld to this on the sudden; a man doth thinke, that if the Minister knowes his vilenesse, he will abhorre him for it.

But (I assure you brethren) there is nothing that doth more set forth the honour of a Christian, and winne the love of a Minister, than this. Indeed it is a shame to commit sinne, but no shame to confesse it upon good grounds; Nay, when the heart comes kindly off, it is admirable to see how a faithfull Minister will approve of such persons, his love is so great towards them; O, saith the Minister, it did mee good to heare that man confesse so freely, I hope the Lord hath wrought kindly in him, certainly now he is in the way to life and happinesse;

I.

2.

Motives
to confesse
our sins

I.

Oh how I love him, I could even be content to put that man in my bosome.

Whereas this overly, and loose dealing of yours, is loathsome to us; do you think we perceive it not? Yes, we may feele it with our fingers, and (when you are gone, I tell you what we think) surely that man is an hypocrite, he hath a hollow heart, hee is not willing to take shame to himselfe for his sinne, his confession never comes to the bottome.

Motive

2.

Secondly, confession is a matter of great safety; I take this to be the only cause, why many a man goes troubled, and gets neither comfort in the pardon of his sin, nor strength against it, because he comes not off kindly in this worke of confession.

When you do nakedly open your sins to a faithfull Minister, you goe out in battell against sin, and you have a second in the field to stand by you: but especially there is comfort in this particular, for the Minister will discover the lusts, and deceits, and corruptions, that you could not finde out, and hee will lay open all those holds of Sathan, and that meanes of comfort that you never knew: I am able to speake it by experience, this hath broke the neck of many a soule, even because he would goe out in single combat against Sathan, and (doe what hee could,) not revealing himselfe to others for helpe, was overthrowne for ever.

As it is with the impostumed part of a mans body, when a man lets out some of the corrupt matter; and so skins it, never healing it to the bottome; at last it cankers inwardly, and comes to a gangrene, & the part must be cut off, or else a man is in danger
of

of his life; so when you let out some corruptions by an overly confession, but suffer some bosome lust to remaine still, as malice, or uncleannesse, &c. Then the soule cankers, and Sathan takes possession of it, and the soule is carried into fearfull abominations.

Many have fallen foully, and lived long in their sins, and all because they would not confesse freely: therefore as you desire to finde out the deceitfulness of your corruptions, confesse them from the bottome of your soules.

Thirdly, this open and free confession, may maintaine the secrecy of the soule; for the onely way to have a mans sinnes covered, is to confesse them, that so they may not be brought upon the stage before all the world.

Oh, saith one, this is contrary to common reason; we are affraid to have our sinnes knowne, that is our trouble; wee keepe our sinnes close, because we would preserve our honour.

I say, the onely way for secrecie, is to reveale our sinnes to some faithfull Minister; for if we confesse our sinnes, God will cover them; if you take shame to your selves, God will honour you; but if you will not confesse your sinnes, God will breake open the doore of your hearts, and let in the light of his truth, and the convicting power of his Spirit, and make it knowne to men and Angels, to the shame of your persons for ever.

If *Iudas* had taken notice of his sin, and yeelded to Christs accusation, and desired some conference with Christ privately, (and said, Good Lord, I am that *Iudas*, and that hell-hound that have received

Motive

3.

Object.

Ans.

mercy from thee in the outward meanes, and have beene entertained among thy people, yet it is I that have taken the *thirty pence*, Lord pardon this sin, & never let this iniquity be laid to my charge;) I doubt not but though *Indas* his soule could not be saved (because that now we know Gods decree of him) yet God would have saved him from the publike shame that was cast upon him for it: but hee did not doe so, but hid his malice in his heart, and professed great matters of love to Christ, and kissed him, and thus hee thought to cover his sinne wisely: but what became of that? the Lord forced him to come and to indite himselfe in the high Priests Hall, before the temporall and spirituall Councell.

So you that keepe your sins as Sugar under your tongues, and will be loose, and malicious, and covetous still; well, you will have your *thirty pence* still, and they are layd up safe, as *Achans wedge of gold was*; remember this, God will one day open the cloffets of your hearts, & lay you upon your deathbeds, and then haply yee will prove mad, and vomit up all: were it not better to confesse your sins to some faithfull Minister now?

If you will not give the Lord his glory, hee will distraine for it, & have it from your heart blood, as *Julian* the Apostata said, When the arrow was shot into his heart, hee plucked it out, and cried, saying, *Thou Galilean, thou hast overcome me*, the Lord distrained for his glory, and had it out of his heart blood.

Now I come to the second fruit of contrition, which is here plainly exprest, and it is this, A restlesse

lesse dislike of themselves and their finnes: as if they had said, *Men and brethren*, we care not what we doe against those evils of ours, whereby the Lord hath beene so much dishonoured, and we indangered; command us what you will, wee must not rest thus, so loathsome are our finnes, that wee will doe any thing rather than be as we are.

So from hence the doctrine is this, The soule that is truly pierced for sinne, is carried against it with a restless dislike & distaste of it: or thus, Sound contrition of heart, ever brings a thorow detestation of sin; this they professedly proclaime before the *Apostles*. As if they had said thus much in more words;

You say wee are they that *have crucified the Lord of life*, and we confesse it, Oh happy had it been for us if we had never listened to the plots of the *Scribes* and *Pharises*, but that which is past cannot be undone or recalled.

What must now be done? if we rest here, we perish for ever: can nothing be done against these our sins, that have done so much against the Lord Jesus? we must loath our selves, and our sins, and we must get out of this estate, or else we are undone for ever.

Now for the further opening of this point, I will discover these three things. First, I will shew what a distaste and dislike this is. Secondly, wherein this hatred and dislike of sinne consists. Thirdly, I will shew the reason, why it must be so.

For the first, namely what dislike this is; for the clearing of which, you must looke backe to that which I spake before of godly sorrow. For of the very same stampe and nature, is this dislike

Doctrine

I.

Dislike
and ha-
tred of
fin what
it is.

and hatred of sinne; and it is thus much in effect. First, there is a hatred in preparation; and secondly, a hatred in sanctification: both are saving workes, but both are not sanctifying workes: vocation is a saving worke, but not a sanctifying worke, they are two distinct workes.

This hatred in preparation, is that which the Lord works upon the soule, & smites upon the soule, and thereby puts this kind of turning into the heart; not that the heart hath any powerfull inward principle of grace before, (for this is the first that the Lord works) so that as before the soule was forced to see sinne, and to feele the burthen of it; so the heart is now brought to dislike sin; this is a worke wrought upon the soule, rather than any thing done by the soule; the Lord is now sitting and preparing the soule for the presence of his blessed Spirit.

How the
soule is
prepared
for Christ.

And in this great work of preparation the Lord workes these three things.

First, he stops the soule from going on any longer in sinne. Secondly, he wearieth the soule with the burthen of sin. Thirdly, by hatred the soule is brought to goe away from those carnall lusts and corruptions, with a secret dislike of those sins which he hath bin wearied withall.

In all these, the soule is a patient (and undergoes the worke of humbling, and breaking,) rather than any way active and operative.

I.

Thus the heart is turned away from sin, and set against those corruptions which heretofore it was burthened with; as it is with the wheelles of a clock, when the wheelles have runne wrong, before a man can

can set them right againe, he must stop it, and turne it to its right place, & all these are meere wrought upon the wheele, by the hand of the workman; for of it selfe it hath no poise nor weight to runne right; but when the clock-master puts to his plummetts, then it is able to runne of it selfe, though the worke-mans hand be not there. So the will & affections of a man, which are the great wheelles of this curious clock of the soule, these wheelles do naturally of themselves runne all hell-ward, and sin-ward, and devil-ward: now before the soule can receive a new principle of grace; first, the Lord unmaskes a man, and makes him come to a stand, and makes him see hell gaping for him; thus the heart is at a maze.

Secondly, the Lord layes the weight of sinne and corruption upon him, and that doth sinke the soule with the horreur, and vexation, and loathsomnesse of his sinnes.

Thirdly, then the soule is carried away from sin by hatred and dislike; and saith, Is this the fruit of sinne that delighteth mee? Oh then no more malice, no more drunkennesse, thus the heart is turned away: but after the soule is once brought on to God by faith, and goes to God, and receives the spirit of sanctification, (of which we shall speak afterwards) there is a new principle of life, and out of this gracious disposition the soule is now growne to hate sinne freely, and to knocke off the fingers from corruptions, and beat downe his lusts, and to love God strongly, out of that power of grace which the Lord hath put into the soule.

There is this difference between sorrow for sinne and

2.

3.

Differēce
betwixt
sorrow for
sin, & ha-
tred of sin.

Ezek. 30.
31.

and *hatred*; sorrow fees the burthen, but hatred flings it away; sorrow loosneth the heart, but hatred lets out the corruption; sorrow saith, doth sin thus pinch the soule? and hatred saith, sin no more then; thus the Lord by his Spirit prepares the soule.

For the prooffe of this point, see what the *Prophet* saith, *Thou shalt consider your wayes, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe your selves.* A poore Christian would teare his heart in pieces in the apprehension of his owne vilenesse, and saith, Good Lord, shall I ever be plagued and annoyed with this sturdy malicious heart? and shall I ever carry this vile heart about me, that will one day carry me to hell, if thou be not the more mercifull? this makes a man even fall out with himselfe. Againe, see what the *Apostle* saith, for this thing you have had godly sorrow, but what hath it wrought in you? doth it worke a *holy indignation and revenge against your sinfull courses*? that when thy soule seeth his filthy abominations rising, swelling, and bubbling within thy heart, it takes on exceedingly, and will scarce owne it selfe; but looks away from sin, and is weary of it selfe, in regard of the same; Nay, (if it were possible) that thou couldest be content to live without a heart, even to forgoe thy selfe, that so thou mayest not be troubled with that vile heart of thine, and so dishonour God no longer. I beseech you observe it, when a man is brought thus farre, Oh he cries to God, and saith, Lord was there ever any poore sinner thus pestered with a vile heart? Oh that this heart should ever be so opposite against the Lord? Lord, except I had a better heart, I would

would I had none at all: thus the heart loathes it selfe, and in what measure the soule is carried with a restlesse dislike of sinne, as it is sinne, in the same degree it is most violent against those sins, whereby he hath most dishonoured God; as you may see in *Zachens*, his heart did more rise against his master-sinne; so the Lord having humbled the repentant Church, *thou shalt defile thy graven Images of silver, and the ornaments of thy golden Images, thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloath, and say, Get you hence.* They hated all sin, but especially their Idolatrous courses; so it will be with the heart that is truly broken, hee will cast away with hatred all his pleasing and profitable sinnes: Thus much of the first passage.

The second is this, Wherein doth this true hatred of sinne consist?

I answer, First, if the soule doth truly abhorre sin, it is very willing to make search for it in every corner of the heart. And any sin that he cannot know himselfe, hee is willing that any Christian, or any friend should make them knowne unto him; A King that hates a traytor that would kill him, and a man that hates a thiefe that would rob him, they are willing that any man should discover that traytor or thiefe; and they will entertaine him kindly, and reward him for it.

When the *Ziphites* came to *Saul*, and told him where *David* was, marke what he saith, *Oh blessed be yee of the Lord, for you have had compassion upon mee.* Just so it is with a broken bleeding heart, that hath an open hatred against his corruptions; if any

Minister

Luk. 19.8.

Esay 30.
21, 22.

2.

Quest.
Wherein
a true dislike of sin
consists.

I.

Answer.

He desires
to have
his sin discovered.

1 Sam. 23.
20, 21.

Minister or Christian will make known some base lusts that lurke in his soule, he will not fly out, and say, What is that to you? Every tub must stand upon his owne bottome, and if I sin I must answer for it: Nay, he will blesse the Lord for it, and say, Blessed be the Lord, and blessed be such a Minister, and blessed be such a neighbour, for they have shewed me my sin, and had compassion upon my soule.

2.

Secondly, as the soule desires to have sin revealed, so it desires to have sin killed, and it makes no matter how it be killed, or by whom, so it be killed at all. Hence it comes to passe, that the soule which truly hates sinne, is ever seeking to those meanes, that are most able to give strength to him, and to overcome his corruptions; & is well pleased that any Minister should meet with the base haunts of his heart, and if the word hit & wound that master-sin of his, hee is mervailous content therewith, he cares not from whom the help comes. The sharpest and keenest reproofes, that will shake his very heart, and draw blood out of sinne, and the most powerfull deliverer of Gods word, that divides betweene the marrow and the bones, he likes best.

Hee labours to have his sin killed.

Nay, though the great Cannons roare, and Gods ordinances worke mightily upon his heart; so that his corruptions may be killed and subdued, he blesseth the Lord, and saith, Blessed be the Lord, I have had a good day of it, the Lord layed battery against this wretched heart of mine; I blesse God for these reproofes & judgements threatned; my heart is in some measure broken under them, I hope my corruptions have gotten their deaths wound this day.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, as he desires to see sinne killed in himselfe, so he is not able to see sin in others, but so far as God hath put authority and opportunity into his hands, he pursues it with deadly indignation.

As a man that hates a murderer, he will not only keepe him from his owne house, but hee pursues him even to the place of Justice: So the Soule that truly hates sinne, will not onely keepe sinne from his owne heart, but he will pluck it from the hearts of others, so farre as possibly he may.

When *Haman* had a spleene against *Mordecai*, he was not only desirous to kill him, but hee would kill *all the nation of the Iewes*, this was hatred indeed: so it is with a broken heart. If a broken-hearted father have had a proud heart, and hath bin wearied with it, hee labours to kill all the brood of those cursed distempers in his children.

Lastly, hee labours to crosse and undermine all those occasions and meanes that have given any succour to his corruptions of heart: the soule hath such a secret grudge against the thriving of sin, that it loathes all occasions that may maintaine his sin: as the drunkard and adulterer hate the place where they went in to commit sinne.

As in warre, haply they cannot take the enemy, but they will drive him out of the Country, and burne downe all his Forts, and fill up all his Trenches, that he may finde no provision: so the heart that truly hates sinne, and hath beene truly broken for it, will hate all occasions and whatsoever may bee any meanes to strengthen it. Even all these proud and whorish lockes, and these Spanish cuts,

3.
Hee hates
sinne in
others.

4.
He hates
all occasions
and
meanes of
sinning.

and all these wanton and garish attires, and light behaviours, which were nothing else but the Tent wherein his vaine filthy light heart hath lodged.

Luke 7.33

Thus it was with *Mary Magdalen*: and the reason why it is so, is this, because the heart that hath bin broken for sinne, and burdened with the evill of it, hath now found by wofull experience, that sinne is the greatest evill of all others: and therefore (for the preservation of it selfe) it will hate that sinne which separates betweene God and the Soule, and with which the safety of the soule cannot stand.

Every thing in reason desires the safety and preservation of it selfe; the soule knowes sin to be the greatest enemy, and therefore it is most invenomed with violence against sin, and saith, Whence come all these miseries? and what is the mint out of which all these plagies and Judgements come? Is it not my sinne? Is it not poverty, is it not sickness, not disgrace that pincheth me, but my sinne first caused all these?

It is the poyson of sin in poverty, and the poyson of sinne in shame, and the wrath of God in all these by reason of my sinne. These evils were not evill to me, but that my sinnes make them so.

Had I a heart to fear God, and to love him, and depend upon him; in poverty God would enrich me, and in shame he would honour me, and in misery he would comfort me: It is not poverty, nor shame, that doth hurt mee; but sinne lies and venommes my soule.

And therefore the soule now cries, *Men and Brethren, What shall I doe to be freed from these corruptions?*

tions? Great are the evils that I have found, and marvellous are the plagues that I have felt, by reason of my finnes: but far worse will that portion be, that I shall have in hell, in endlesse torments hereafter: this will be the perfection of all misery; let it be any thing rather than this: it is better here now to be plagued, than everlastingly damned.

The first Use is a ground of admirable comfort, and strong consolation to all such as have found this dislike and hatred of sinne: hee may be sure his heart hath beene broken for sin, and so consequently, he shall certainly have Christ and grace.

I doubt not but every soule is perswaded of this, and saith, Indeed if I could finde my soule grieving within me for my rebellions and sins, I should not doubt of mercy; but how shall I know whether my soule hath beene ever as yet truely wounded for sin, as sinne?

I answer, if thy heart is carried against thy finnes with an utter indignation against them, then certainly thy soule hath beene truely broken; indeed, sometimes a man doth hate his finnes, more than ever hee hath beene burthened with them; but thus it is commonly, if thy hatred be good, thy sorrow hath beene sincere; for how can thy heart goe against sinne, except thou have found some evill in it? and how canst thou be an enemy to corruption, except thy heart hath beene wounded with it? therefore let me advise all those that desire to have an evidence of the worke of grace in their soules, to goe in secret, and examine their hearts, whether they can make huy and cry after their corruptions;

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vs. 1.

Object.

Answer.

How to
know that
your soules
are truely
broke for
sinne.

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Pfal. 39. 24
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can you be content that all your sinfull distempers, (even those that would affect you most) should be made knowne either in publike by the ministry of the word, or in private by some faithfull Christian? and can you be content that hee should come home to your hearts; and dragge out your corruptions before the world? then you have beene wounded for sinne, and are enemies against it, (as David saith) *Trie mee O Lord, and examine mee, and prove my heart, and my reins; and see if there bee any wickednesse in mee.* Hee deales like a good subject that unlocks all the doors, and bids the officers search if there be any traitor in his house, if any one hide the traitor, hee is a traitor himselfe in so doing; so David as it were, sets open the doore of his heart, and saith, Good Lord, if there be any wickednesse in mee yet not discovered, Lord let that word, that Spirit, and that messenger of thine, find it out; reprove me, convince me Lord, and discover my hypocrisie, and pride of heart, This is an honest heart certainly.

2. Secondly, when thou hast found out thy sinne by the helpe of the Minister, here thou wilt not rest, but huntest for the blood of thy corruptions, and canst not be quiet till thou seeest the death of them; the soule can doe little of it selfe, but it would have the Lord doe all for it: so though thou have not sanctifying grace, and hast not power of thy selfe to kill thy corruptions, yet thou makest all thy friends thou hast to use all meanes to sinke thy enemies that else would sinke thee.

As it is amongst men, when a man hath found his

his enemy, he followes the law hotly, and hee will have his life or else it shall cost him a sal, he pursues him from one court to another, and makes all the friends that he can, that he may plague him; and if all the law in the land will doe it, hee will have him hanged; this is a right hatred indeed; so the soule can doe little of it selfe, yet it indeavours and makes a levy of forces, and prayers, & will not leave sin with life, it pursues sin hotly, and if all Gods words and all the promises, and if the grace of Christ will doe the deed, it will not rest till it see the decay of sinne, and therefore it will even drag sin before the Lords tribunall, and there cry for judgement, and say, Lord, kill this proud malicious heart of mine, these are thy enemies, & the enemies of thy grace; Lord they sought my blood, let mee have their blood; blood for blood, tooth for tooth, O let me see their destruction.

Secondly, is this contrition? & doth it bring forth such fruits? then true broken godly sorrow is rare in the world, and there are few that have it even amongst those that thinke themselves some body in the bosome of the Church; therefore save me a labour, and cast your eyes abroad in the world and enquire in the houses and villages where you dwell, and knocke at your neighbors hearts, & say, is there any broken hearts here? it will appeare, there are but few broken hearts here to bee found amongst the professors of the Gospell; and so, few shall bee saved.

If this hatred of sinne be a true evidence of broken heartednesse, what will become of a world of

Pro. 21. 29

Pro. 1. 28.

prophane persons, that are caried on with the pursuit of sinne, from which they will not bee plucked, the drunkard will have his cups, and the adulterer his queanes, and the chapman his false weights; they are so farre from this dislike of sinne, that they hate every thing save sin; they hate the godly Magistrate that would punish them; nay, they hate the Lord himselfe, and say, it was pittie there was such a law made to punish sinne, what shall we doe? let us do any thing rather than be hindered in our pleasures; what shall we doe that we may not be checked and reprov'd? get you downe to hell, & there you shal have elbow roome enough, there you may bee as wicked and as prophane as you will, and that will be your portion, unlesse the Lord be mercifull unto you. Consider what the wise man speakes, and doe not think, a little humbling of your soules before God, and a few prayers will serve your turne, No, no, *Then shall they cry, (saith the text) but I will not answer, they shall seek me earely, but shall not find me, because they hated knowledge, and did not seeke the feare of the Lord.* Oh how fearfull is the doom, and how certaine is the desolation of such poore wretches!

Now the Lord, for his mercies sake, settle these truthes in every one of
your hearts,

Amen.

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